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VOL. II.

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VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN

PAINTER—SOLDIER—TRAVELLER

Autobiographical Sketches

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND THE FRENCH
BY
F. H. PETERS, M.A.
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AFTER DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

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INDIA—*continued*

INDIA.

PART II.—CASHMERE—LADAK.—*continued.*

CHAPTER I.—*continued.*

THE man at whose hut I had dried my clothes the evening before came to tell me that his brother had been bitten by a snake while engaged in gathering brushwood. As he was more than fifteen miles distant, I did not go to him myself, but sent Lodi with medicines from our homeopathic medicine-chest, and accurate instructions for the sick man. The man had not observed the snake till the moment that it bit him, but could not kill it, because his eyes began to grow dim. Luckily, his brother was not far off and dragged him home.

Lodi gave him the medicine to take, and applied a lotion to the wound on his toe after he had bound his foot very firmly above it. At first no blood showed; then it began to flow, and the sick man became easier. After a second bandaging he

went to sleep, and on the following day was quite well. He assured us that the snake which had bitten him was one of the most poisonous kind.

* * *

One of our bearers complained of pains in the body, loss of blood, and other troubles; so that we had to send the poor man back. For the last few days we have had frightfully bad weather in the mountains. Above us and below it rained, and high up it snowed. One day, after heavy rain, the mountains were of a perfectly yellow colour, and when the sun set the yellow light disappeared in a grey mist.

The observation of the colours of the mountains at different hours of the day and night, and in different kinds of weather, was extremely interesting. After a fall of snow during the day everything was white. The snowy peaks of the mountains could not be distinguished from the air. At evening, however, they were flooded with rosy light and threw long blue shadows. A storm of thunder and lightning in the mountains is a magnificent scene; preferable at a distance, however, especially as we were still without the tent we had ordered, and had very little protection against the weather.

Our joy, therefore, was not slight when the tent

arrived, for which speedy consignment we had to thank the good-nature of the Resident. The tent was made of a double thickness of stuff, so that we had nothing more to fear from these beautiful storms with their accompaniment of thunder and lightning.

* * *

I was carefully sitting working in front of the tent, when suddenly our cook, Lal-chan, and the *sayce* (groom), Rasaka, appeared before me, complaining of each other with angry looks. The cook charged the sayce with having torn his clothes, and the sayce charged the cook with having bitten his hand. They had already beaten one another before this, and now they wished a settlement. Rasaka begged, besides, to be allowed to go back to Srinagur; but naturally he did not expect to have his request granted. I investigated the matter, and discovered that they slept near one another, and that the sayce in his sleep had pushed the cook a little, and the latter had promptly responded with his teeth. Our washerman bore witness that they had come to blows in the night, because the sayce was supposed to have laid his foot on the cook's nose. I attempted to reconcile the opponents, and had the satisfaction of seeing

them make friends in a short time. The cook even borrowed some money from his former enemy shortly afterwards, apparently to cement their friendship.

Of these two Rasaka was the more quarrelsome and the less trustworthy. Against the cook, who was of a peaceable nature, there is nothing to be said except that he had already frequently treated us to joints and sauces which were simply uneatable. Our washerman was a most foolish, excitable, and good-natured being, extraordinarily small of stature, and unsavoury of smell. The fact of one of our hens having for several days running laid an egg in his bed caused him great delight, because the superstitious creature counted it a presage of good fortune.

* * *

We soon had to take leave of the forests, which disappeared behind the station of Baltal. As if to bid it farewell, I strolled through the thick pine forest with its now doubly precious fragrance. Trees were already scarce near Baltal; a little level spot close to the river served us as a site for our tent. From this point to Metawul, the mountain pass, which reaches a height of 11,300 feet, it is 58 miles.

The road began to be very dangerous, especially for the horses. Accordingly I went often on foot, in order not to fall down a precipice to the joy of the hawks and eagles. A short time before a horse had fallen down and had become the prey of the birds; eagles, hawks, and ravens were pecking at the body. A number of eagles were hovering above us, probably in the expectation of one of us falling over. Above us on the road there still lay the bleached and polished skeleton of some animal.

When we reached the head of the pass, each of our people threw a stone on a great heap we found there, made in honour of the god of the mountain. As our horses were very badly groomed that day, my husband bade the groom throw on a double quantity as a propitiatory sacrifice.

The descent was accomplished in the snow. We made a halt on the only dry spot in the valley. All around the snow was rapidly melting, and everywhere flowed streams of water. During the night two horses ran away from us, and it was no small trouble to catch them again. Besides other articles of food, our stock of onions had come to an end; but we found some wild ones growing here, with not at all a bad flavour, and in such quantities that they only needed gathering.

The road was dangerous; the horses were continually sinking into the snow, and often also in deep mud. I nearly fell from my horse, which slipped on the ice. At midday snow fell again.

* * *

We reached the resting-place on the river Minimarek, at the foot of a huge glacier, one of the most beautiful and regularly formed that we saw. Our tent would have been pitched in the neighbourhood of a little hut, but its occupant, being frightened at our presence, placed in front of his door a dead horse which infected the whole place—a decided and effective means, which he had certainly not made use of for the first time, for when we set forth again on our way we heard behind us the delighted laugh of the dwellers in the hut.

My husband stayed behind to make a sketch of the glacier, but I rode on about seven or eight miles further; turning back again, however, because otherwise it would have been too far for him to go back there for the continuation of his work. Also, there was in the neighbourhood a little level place, and water close at hand.

* * *

The sky over our heads was extraordinarily blue—so wonderfully blue that I was convinced that if my husband were to paint it just as it was people in Europe would say it was unnatural. In the morning there was a frost, and the water was frozen. Otherwise the weather was fine, and the sketch of the glacier made rapid progress. The huntsman invited us to come on a hunt for wild-goats; but for that one has to go far and to climb high, so my husband could not make up his mind to go, especially as a goat-chase not only takes up a great deal of time, but requires a great deal of patience and perseverance. One afternoon, close by the tent, I almost ran against a wild-goat. We were both so completely astonished and startled at this unexpected meeting that we stood for a long time immovable and looked at one another. Then I tried to get to the tent as quickly as possible, and sent Lodi out with the gun; but no trace of the goat was any longer to be seen. Here we killed the sheep which we had with us. The bearers threw the skin into the fire, singeing off the wool; then they divided the burnt skin among them and ate it. It must be owned they had good digestions.

* * *

The bearers are really becoming unbearable, they are so lazy, and are always taking too much brandy. One of them, a one-eyed man, was particularly barefaced: he came a second time in company with one of the idiots to demand money on some pretext, though this time fortune did not favour the Cyclops. My husband lost patience, and, instead of money for brandy, gave him a sharp box on the ear, which made both him and his comrade bound back; and they hurried back to their companions in order to tell them the melancholy result of the business.

My husband shot some wild-pigeons here, which made some variety in our scanty *menu*.

There are plenty of marmots here. They sit up on their hind-legs, rushing off to their holes at the approach of any danger. There they again sit up in the same position, consider the matter for an instant, and then disappear with lightning rapidity, so that a bullet will seldom stop them. Their holes are very deep, and always have several openings.

I saw here for the first time some yaks, belonging to a corn-caravan, which were grazing along the road.

Our next halting-place was about two miles distant from the glacier, near the river where

I had already made a halt before. The distance from here to a place called Dras, which lies within the border of the province of Ladak, is made without another halt.

On the way there we passed a perfectly perpendicular rock which rises to a height of about 2,000 feet above a precipice. The road does not pass over the rock itself, but over a kind of little bridge which rests upon projecting beams like an open gallery. We got off the horses and led them along the shaking pathway by the bridles; my husband only remained on his horse—and what did I see!—my discreet pony, which he was riding, took it into his head to play pranks and to leap about upon these boards. My husband confessed to me later that his heart was in his mouth. Leaning himself against the rock, he succeeded in getting off the saddle and in checking the untimely gaiety of the animal. The least awkward movement at this point might have cost him his life; all the more so that a single glance downwards is enough to make one dizzy.

CHAPTER II.

We had heard so much on our way of the city of Dras, in Ladak, that we were quite disappointed when we came in sight of it: a miserable, uninteresting little fortress and a few huts, where not only are no fowls and no mutton to be obtained, but not even twigs with which to make a fire.

Here we saw the Ladak ponies. They are small, and have long hair all over their bodies, especially on the underside. The spring (it was May now) had robbed them of a great part of their winter coat, and the hair hung in isolated bunches, which gave them a very wild appearance. My husband sketched a couple of these horses. Our huntsman found an opportunity here of distinguishing himself. He imparted to us the solemn announcement that he had seen a pheasant near; and we watched how he crept to the tree on which the rare bird was sitting.

He killed and brought us—a magpie!—of the same kind as those we have in Europe. I ex-

plained to him that we could not eat it; and though he assured us that the flesh was of a very good flavour, and that all English gentlemen ate it, we handed it over to the dogs, to the great disappointment of the huntsman.

This place lies, as already mentioned, in Ladak proper, and the type of the inhabitants begins here to resemble that of the Mongolians. They wear goatskins on their backs; the women decorate themselves with silver ornaments, and wear head-dresses made of black cloth. The hair is plaited in small plaits, and among the younger women is plastered down on the head with grease; among the older ones, dishevelled and matted together. The want of cleanliness becomes more apparent as one penetrates further into the mountains. The women seem even to surpass the men in this particular. From this point one enters the region where, as we were informed, polyandry begins, and one can meet with women so lucky as to possess as many as five husbands.

* * *

In some parts the population consists of Mussulman Shiites. For instance, in Tashgan, which is the next place after Dras, all the inhabitants are Shiites, and resemble Jews in the type of their faces,

a resemblance which is enhanced by the long ringlets which the men wear on their foreheads.

The houses, which have a fairly good appearance, are built of stones and mud, the people living above, while the cattle have their quarters underneath. Close to the village stands a shabby little mosque.

On a bush in the neighbourhood of the village hung a lock of woman's hair and an offering to the divinity. My husband joked about this, and declared that the hair must have been offered up to the god by some woman who had obtained the trophy in a fight with another.

The Mussulmans who live here do not seem to be any less superstitious than the Buddhists. Like them they carry amulets sewn on to their garments, often quite a number of them; with this distinction, however, that the Buddhists obtain their little bits of paper inscribed with prayers and curses from Lhassa in Thibet, while the Shiites have theirs manufactured by Mullahs who come from India. One such distributor of heavenly favour we saw on our way, not far from the village, writing amulets for the surrounding believers. The holy man gave us a glance of great disfavour.

Rain is not frequent here; even during the violent storms we had some time ago on the glacier it was quite fine here. We were told that the

GLACIER.

rain-bringing monsoon was kept off by the high mountain range which we had left behind us. My husband here also drew some typical figures, and shot a quantity of pigeons and partridges.

* * *

Already we experienced the pleasant feeling which travellers in sandy, stony, and ill-wooded countries receive from their arrival at a resting-place where water is at hand and vegetation plentiful. The latter—it may have been only a delusion—appeared in such a place fresher and of an intenser green.

From the village of Tashgal the view of the mountain which lay in front of us was certainly beautiful, but, it must be confessed, depressing; for perfectly bare mountain chains and sandstone rocks, for the most part yellow, sometimes, however, brown, lay before us, one chain after another, as if in the scenes of a theatre. One could hardly believe that there could be any passage between those dark masses.

We continued our road on the bank of a little stream, which mingled with the muddy waters of the river Tras, but even then kept its own clear stream distinct for a long way. At this point and further down the banks of the river we saw quantities

of roses, sometimes growing in great bushes; and also some wonderfully beautiful yellow roses. Amidst the entire want of vegetation on both sides of the road, and on the sandstone rocks which overhung the mountain-stream, these roses imparted a charm to the scene which it is not easy to describe.

In some places near the river enormous pieces of good white marble are to be seen. On the way are a great many water trenches, which is quite natural, for nothing will grow in this sandy soil without artificial watering. Without seeing the water it is easy to trace the course of the canals by observing the fresh green of the vegetation.

It is difficult to get fuel here, or food either, especially cow's milk. At Dras they swore to me by all they held sacred that the milk I bought of them, and which was of a bluish colour, was cow's milk; however, it afterwards proved to be goat's milk, which is perhaps very wholesome, but not nearly equal to cow's milk in taste.

The road here is very dangerous in places, and a horse which stumbles inevitably falls straight into the river. Human habitations become more frequent. The natives seem to have great trouble in protecting their dwellings from the rivers, which constantly change their bed.

* * * *

At the station of Karjil we were very courteously received, apparently through the recommendation of the Commissioner of Ladak, Captain Molloy, to whom my husband had sent his letter of introduction from General Walker. On our arrival we both received garlands of roses, which, according to the Indian mode of greeting, were placed round our necks. However, this courtesy did not prevent the magistrate of the village from sending us in so high a bill that my husband felt obliged to make an energetic protest, after which the prices fell immediately.

Karjil is a village with a small fortress; there is actually an inn there for travellers; it may readily be imagined, however, that we preferred to put up our tent. My husband bought a few native costumes, in which we found several talismans sewn.

The whole place where we stopped was made dirty by Russell's caravan, which had passed by there only a short time before; there was also another caravan from Yarkand halting close by. We bought a little he-goat here, which our washerman undertook to look after; and at every station he was on the look-out for a milch-goat to supply his little charge with food.

A storm had been threatening, but it passed

over; though it still promised to rain, for we saw a rainbow.

* * *

From here to Shergol is nearly eighty miles. We rejoiced at the sight of the little stone walls

A CASHMERE WOMAN.

built here and there in honour of the deity, as at the sight of old friends. In Sikkim, where we had first seen them, they had prayers written on stone slabs; here, they were simply on unhewn stones. There are fewer carvings on the stones here. A

he station of Tcherjil we saw for the first time monuments to the honour of distinguished people and saints. All round the lower part of them ran bas-reliefs coarsely made of clay, and painted. The figures are very misshapen, with clumsy heads. From here the country begins to be mainly Buddhist, although part of the inhabitants of this village are Shiites.

* * * *

It is interesting to trace the progress of this or that religion in these countries. Buddhism, driven out of the valleys, found a retreat in the Himalayas, where it was driven back further and further into the mountains by Brahminism and Islamism. The Mussulmans of Cashmere of the Sunnite sect absorb the Mussulmans of the Shiite sect on the borders of Ladak; the Shiites, in their turn, absorb the Buddhists who dwell next to them. I say 'absorb' because Shiites sometimes go over to the sect of the Sunnites, but never *vice versâ*: and it sometimes happens, as we heard on inquiry, that Buddhists become Shiites.

'During the eleven years that I have lived here,' the tikodar, or elder, told us, 'three such conversions have taken place, but I never heard of a Shiite becoming a Buddhist.' One must accordingly

suppose that the most vigorous and aggressive religion here is the Sunnite form of Islamism.

SHIITE MUSSULMAN.

It finds proselytes among the professors of all other religions, and absorbs (in a spiritual sense)

the Shiites that come in contact with it. The Shiites, on their side, find proselytes among the Buddhists, whom they slowly but irresistibly drive farther and farther into the mountains. One may conclude that the Mussulmans, especially the Sunnites, will in time drive Buddhism quite out of the mountains; it certainly will not happen very soon, however, because the proper centre of Buddhism in Thibet is not far off on the one side, and the great Buddhist people of China give them a strong moral support on the other.

* * *

In Shergol a very interesting Buddhist monastery is built on a rock, with a stuccoed and painted façade and balcony. The interior of the church is poor—there is not even a praying-machine; the lama is constantly employed in working in the fields, so that a peasant showed us the church and took us through the cells. The influence of Brahminism asserts itself in the pictures on the wall, which display, besides the god of war on a white horse, various other deities with numerous heads, hands, and feet.

The whole district is now raised considerably above the valley of the river, but obviously was once itself the river bed, the subsoil consisting en-

tirely of river-drift. By the sharply defined lines upon the rocky sides of this basin, one can perceive that during the course of centuries it has gradually become higher and higher.

In the mountains all round, iron, copper, sulphur, and graphite are found. Among the natives we saw ornaments of coral and pearls.

My husband here made some sketches which represented yaks carrying salt. He wished also to draw the lama who came to visit us from the neighbouring convent; the unfavourable weather, however, obliged the worthy priest to go home again. When he and his two companions were gone, Lodi observed the loss of a teacup, and sent to ask the guest as he went home whether some of his party had not taken the cup with them by mistake. Of course he received an answer in the negative.

* * *

Our postillion, one of our bearers, who had very long legs, and had therefore been entrusted with the commission, came back from Srinagur with various provisions. He told us, among other pieces of news, that the Maharajah of Cashmere had received a steamboat from the English Government, and in return had made a great many presents of shawls in Simla. The messenger also reported that

the Resident, Henderson, was going away from Srinagur on a journey; from which it followed that we should not be able to call upon him so soon as we had intended.

* * *

We travelled on and soon passed a convent, the lama of which came out to meet us. The convent stands on an enormously high rock, and looks more like a fortress than a place devoted to religion; only the daubs of red and yellow colour on it show the purpose of the building. My husband, who had scaled the rock with Lodi, informed me that the way up was very difficult and even dangerous.

We also passed by a huge stone on which the figure of Buddha with four hands is chiselled, stretching from top to bottom. In one hand he holds a basket, in the other rings and various ornaments. This figure reminds one very much of those in the grottos of Adjunta and Ellore, near Bombay.

We again made a halt opposite a glacier.

On the following day we went over a pass thirteen thousand feet high, where there was no snow, for the snow line is not lower here than from nineteen to twenty thousand feet. After we had crossed the pass, we rested in a hut by a spring, and then went on. The heat was almost

unbearable, and we reached our next station, Tchargol, with great effort. Near the little village of Korbu, on the way, we saw a great many tchitens. Altogether there are a good many villages about here, most of them lying high. There are also to be found in the district the remains of more or less ancient buildings on wild, precipitous rocks. The country, in spite of its bleak and inhospitable character, is yet not without a wild, original kind of beauty. Although we suffered much from the heat, I was much delighted with the various scenes, of which my husband took sketches.

In order to protect myself from the heat I hung a damp cloth under my hat. I do not know whether it was this cloth, or the heat, but something made me quite ill. When we at last made a halt at Korbu near the river, between two steep rocks, I was seized with trembling, my head began to ache, and, in a word, all the symptoms of sunstroke appeared. I immediately took some quinine, but was no better on the following day; and when I attempted to leave the tent, I fell down in a faint. My husband was much alarmed, and called the bearers to carry me back into the tent. When the bearers, so my husband told me afterwards, saw me lying motionless and deadly

pale they began, after the Eastern custom, to whine and howl loudly.

I soon returned to consciousness, but was not better till we discovered the cause of the constant pain; which was that the sunbeams had penetrated through the roof of the tent, and were beating all the time upon my head. The more quietly I lay the more powerful was their effect. As soon as an extra covering had been laid on the roof of the tent I became easier. Notwithstanding this, as we did not exactly know the cause of the illness, and as we were afraid that it might be due to the height of this place (about nine thousand feet), we determined to take the precaution of retracing our steps a little. I was put into a kind of improvised palanquin, our people were collected together, and we went back over the pass. We paused to rest at a height of seven thousand feet. As soon as I was quite recovered, we continued our onward journey. During the time of my illness at Korbu my husband drew a very interesting old woman, who had no less than five husbands. She was rather stout; her grey locks, which she evidently never or, at any rate, very seldom combed, fluttering round her head in great disorder. She wore a hood on which was a large turquoise, a dress of black stuff

THE WIFE OF FIVE HUSBANDS.

woven by herself, and a goatskin over her shoulders.

* * *

We approached the station of Lama Yuru, and made a halt by the way on the top of the pass at Kutulla. We now found ourselves at a height of more than eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. Still, neither we nor our people were troubled with pain in the head during this time; the quietness of the march, uninterrupted by anything disagreeable, probably contributed to this result. We are, for this and other reasons, of the opinion that headache, sickness, and other symptoms which come on at great heights, are just as much due to exhaustion and nervousness as to the state of the atmosphere. Of course I do not speak of very great altitudes, during the ascent of which hæmorrhage and oppression of the head and other phenomena appear.

My husband and Lodi shot some blackcock here. As it turned out, it was a good thing we had made a halt half-way, for it was still a long way to Lama Yuru. In the distance glimmered the village, which is perched on the top of a tall perpendicular rock. A little further, almost on the road, is a long row of tchitens, on which here and there runs

the usual inscription in letters almost the height of a man—'Om mani padmi hum.'

We crossed the Indus, rushing along in a muddy stream. Near the point at which we crossed rises a little fortress, which is placed so as to command the level plain, and not the interior of the mountains, probably on account of the inroads of Indian conquerors in earlier days.

The country, as one travels through it, is pretty, the sandstone sometimes yellow, sometimes red or dark blue, and sometimes even almost black. The colouring all round offers an interesting subject for sketches, though my husband was hurrying on to Lee, and we continued our journey, only halting for refreshment and rest at night. He made a sketch of the village of Lama Yuru, however.

At Lee a place was assigned to us in a fruit garden, and the Resident there sent us tchapprassis (messengers) to escort us.

European women have apparently never been seen here before, for in the villages the natives ran together and gazed at me, as if I were a strange animal. We saw here, I may remark by the way, a few pretty natives; their hair is black as tar, plaited in very small tails; on their heads they wear a narrow headdress embroidered with pearls and turquoises. Their long jackets are made of

black and blue stuff. The older women, who wear goatskins, occupy themselves in watching the flocks and teasing the wool, a business which the men also do not despise; in many places it is chiefly done by the men.

Late in the evening we reached the village of Hemis, near which is a large convent. In this place polyandry flourishes. In a family of several brothers there is usually only one wife among them. The head of the family is the eldest brother; his rights come first, then those of the second brother, and so on.

It sometimes happens that the wife buys her freedom from the eldest brother with a horse, a cow, or something of the sort, with his consent; but such occurrences are rare, because they involve the necessity of the younger brother, with whom she wishes to live, building a separate house and setting up housekeeping on his own account. It must generally be supposed that the chief reason for polyandry is the poverty of the people, because, as the price of a bride is not small, the family saves considerably by having one wife among them. It follows naturally that the women are overworked and age very quickly. One cannot easily form an idea of the ugliness of the older women, and especially of the very old ones. The reason of

their very unpleasing appearance is the excessive amount of work they do. What a strain must be placed upon their strength by the rearing of their numerous children! Under such circumstances can there be any of the coquetry and jealousy which reigns among our European women, who have only one husband?

We endeavoured to find out whether there was any jealousy or quarrelling among the brothers on account of their common wife, but the people whom we asked did not appear to understand what it was we wished to know.

'How can there be any quarrelling if the eldest brother is the chief of the house?'

'But the second brother?'

'He is the second in the household.'

'And the youngest?'

'He is also the youngest in the house.'

'Does it never happen that the wife prefers the youngest to the eldest?'

'How could that be possible! One cannot imagine such a thing.'

However, they owned a little shamefacedly that, especially of late years, quarrels on this account had taken place, which had been decided by an English sahib (gentleman). This they appeared to regard as particularly disgraceful. In such a state

of affairs one or two women out of each family go to a convent, and the daughters of poor parents are obliged to make up their minds to single blessedness. We paid a visit to the monastery, which was six miles off. The road is very difficult, and in many places we almost rolled down the precipice.

The building is large and of an original appearance. Fifty monks live there with a great number of pupils. Each monk has a separate cell with a very small balcony. There is ample opportunity here for a life of contemplation, but the desire to satisfy the wants of the lower nature seems to have obtained the upper hand.

At our arrival the lamas crept out, like rats out of their holes. They gazed at us with wild and unfriendly looks; only the eldest of them, a stout red-cheeked man, who seemed to be the housekeeper, showed himself more communicative.

In the centre of the building rises the temple, which is lighted from above, and is coarsely painted in a new style. Behind the altar is the statue of Sakya-Muni (Buddha), and on one side of this figure some divinity or other, with a tower on his back and many hands. There also are placed the clothes of the oldest lama of the convent, now dead some four years, and beside whose grave are daily placed food and drink. They showed us the

chamber where this lama formerly dwelt; the figure of the dead man is placed there, and before it every monk who passes by falls on his knees, and prays. This lama is immortal, though this time his new birth is long delayed. The worthy lamas have already asked many times at Thibet whether the new birth of their chief has not taken place yet. An answer, however, has not come—perhaps because the great lamas of Thibet are too busy; for it cannot be a very difficult affair to find a suitable boy of four. Whenever we asked about anything, the monk who answered us knelt down and spoke with folded hands. We asked for some tea, and obtained some; but of course it was not what we call tea, but the kind of tea-soup they give one there, made of tea, milk, butter, and salt, to which we had already got accustomed. When we asked for some bread, they gave us, instead of baked bread, a little bag of meal, which, as usual, we had to make into dough and bake in our own oven.

Baked bread is very little eaten here; the natives prefer to swallow it in lumps of dough, which is certainly convenient!

The thick sticks with iron points, hanging near the door of the temple, are of special interest. With them, as we were informed, the refractory scholars of the convent were chastised; though

probably refractory monks also sometimes received correction. The monks here dress like those in Sikkim, but they belong to a different sect of celibates. Their costume is yellow, and their high caps also are of yellow-coloured stuff. One of these latter hung in the temple over the door. When they told us this cap was for sale we bought it for two rupees. We also wished to buy some other interesting things; but the monks would not hear of it, fell on their knees, and besought us not to insist on it. Of course we left them in possession of their treasures and contented ourselves with the cap.

* * *

At about ten minutes' distance stands a nunnery. At the time of our visit there were only two nuns there, an old one and a young one, who were drying vegetables for the winter. Three nuns usually live in this convent, the rest remain with their relations and help them in their work in the fields. The convent stands in the middle of a thick forest in a romantic country; it is, however, much smaller than the monks' convent, and also much poorer.

* * *

The following day my husband painted a woman in the village, aged twenty years, who has

three husbands who are brothers; the fourth brother has a separate wife. This woman's features were tolerably regular, and the colour of her skin was white. Round her neck she wore a string of coral beads, and on her arms, as bracelets, two good-sized mussel-shells. I gave her a trinket of large green glass beads, and she seemed pleased.

The want of cleanliness among these people, especially among the women, strikes one forcibly. As I have already said, they wear their hair in small plaits, and leave it apparently for a long time without being combed. The men also but seldom undo the plaits of their hair. They wear long black soft caps which look like bags, the upper half of which is made to hang down on whichever side is exposed to the sun.

* * *

I continue to be an object of interest to all the ladies of this country; they watch me with great curiosity, and question me about all the articles of my dress. It is impossible to give them greater pleasure than by letting them feel the garments and examine the quality of the stuff.

We probably owed the good-will which we met with here to the orders of Captain Molloy. The greatest possible attention that the natives could pay us was to bring us a cow, that is to say, a yak,

every time that we halted, and milk it before our eyes. Everything that we paid the tikodar, or elder, for food, he paid over to the Resident's tchapprassi who accompanied us; of course to secure his good-will, for it was possible that the chief might question him.

* * *

On the way much granite is to be seen, and other hard kinds of stone. Here and there also we caught sight of some marble. Everywhere water trickles through in great quantities.

The capital of Ladak is not far off. We rested once more in some little garden, and from thence reached the town in great heat; after we had passed the bazaar, where we were greeted with many salaams, we made a halt in the Resident's garden, who sent us chairs, and, what was still more acceptable, tea also.

The town of Lee is rather a melancholy place, with a powerless rajah, for the power is entirely in the hands of the Resident. On the rocks stands a palace built of grey stone, near which rises a temple: neither building is at all imposing.

The vegetation is extremely poor, and the inhabitants, as may be supposed, do not live in very great plenty.

We did not, however, stay here long, and saw but little of the life of the people, which in all probability is not very interesting. Apathy and poverty are the most prominent characteristics of this place.

When I asked for a cobbler, in order that he might mend our shoes, he seriously advised us to send first for the smith, because he had no nails. I thereupon asked him to use thread instead of nails, but he said he must first get the thread.

The women here fasten their dresses together with clasps in the form of a shield, made of copper, with little chains of mussel-shells.

The fowls are very peculiar here, with very long and broad tail-feathers; the ravens are large and fat. The goats have horns of extraordinary length, sometimes as much as $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, or even more. It must be observed that in Lee everything is dear; even the carpets from Yarkand, which go through Lee to Srinagur, are more expensive here than in Cashmere.

At the house of the Resident we saw a couple of dogs of a pure Thibet breed; their dark grey hair is short, the ears are long, like those of spaniels, the head very broad, and sharp at the nose, which gives them an intelligent appearance. Molloy would not consent to give the dogs up to us,

because he was thinking of presenting them to the Prince of Wales.

Captain Molloy is a great hunter, as may be seen by the numerous trophies which adorn his little house, in the shape of horns, deerskins, and wild-sheep-skins.

He often spends day after day at a height of from nineteen to twenty thousand feet in pursuit of a sheep, but has frequently to return home without his booty, for these animals are very intelligent. There is a kind of wild sheep here (*Ovis ammon*), whose horns make only one twist; my husband told him that in Turkestan there is an allied species (*Ovis polis*), with two twists in their horns. It may be doubted, however, if the Turkestan sheep are stronger than these, whose power of leaping and butting is frightful. The captain was so interested in the species of the *Ovis polis* that he was seized with a desire to go to Turkestan in order to procure a specimen or two. My husband talked much with him on the affairs of Central Asia, the greater part of which he knows well, while the Resident knows it only from books and hearsay. He had made great efforts to go there, and hoped now to obtain the post of English Agent at Yarkand, which was filled by a certain Mr. Shaw, a sworn enemy to Russia and every-

thing Russian. My husband greatly cooled his ardour by assuring him that not only was the appointment of a successor to Shaw quite superfluous, but that Shaw himself would have to be recalled, because the Chinese, slowly indeed, but surely, were approaching the frontier of Jetyshar, and within a short time would take possession of it; in which case there would certainly be a massacre, in which all foreigners would be murdered.

'You believe, then, that Shaw is in danger?' asked the captain.

'Not just yet, but he will soon find himself in very great danger.'

* * *

About 1½ miles beyond Lee there was another long, low stone wall, on which was a representation of Buddha sitting on the Lotus, with prayers inscribed round the figure.

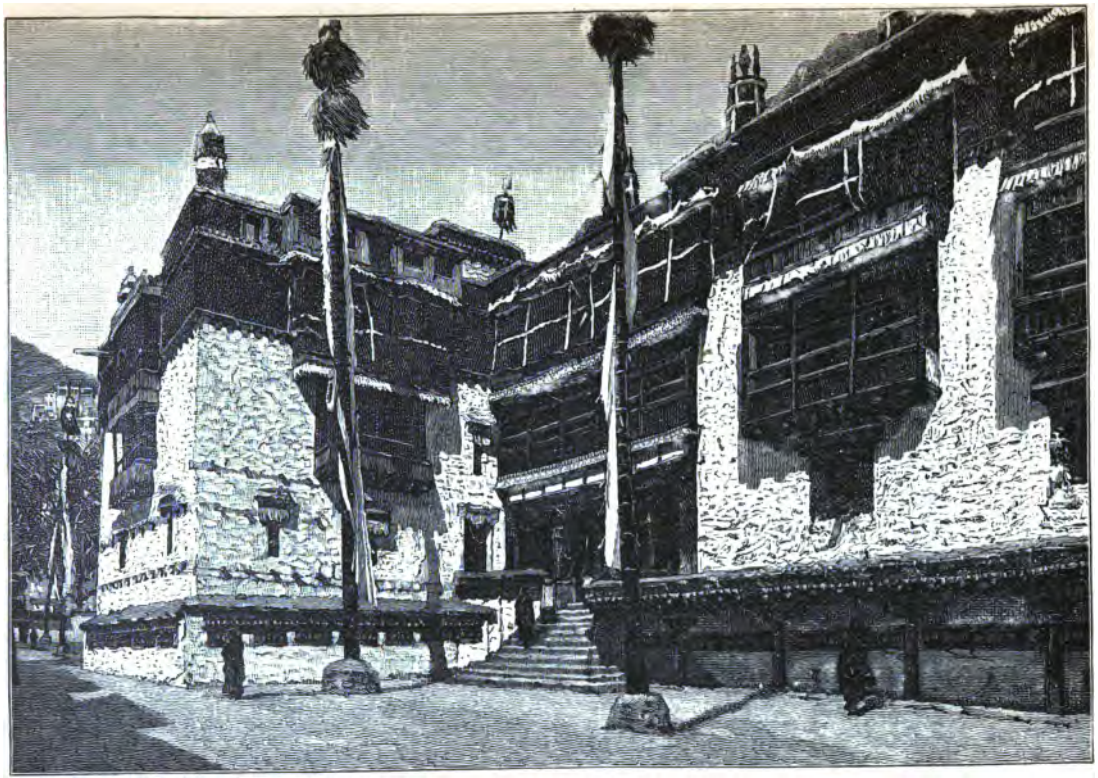
We left our coolies from Cashmere behind us at Lee, for they had become odious to us on account of their tempers; the huntsman, in particular, probably on account of his continual ill-luck in hunting, was always grumbling and swearing.

We now took fresh bearers at every station, but immediately had an unpleasant experience. It was about half-way, at a little village where we had

made a halt No sooner had the coolies placed my palanquin down in the shade than they ran away. We had only traversed some three or four miles, and my husband ran in a great rage to seek the fugitives. A few gave themselves up, but others dodged in and out of house and garden. One fellow went on to the roof, and when my husband went up after him he got down safely, and, to the delight of the rest, actually made grimaces at him from below, being convinced that his pursuer could not jump down after him. However, my husband did jump down, and seized the shameless wretch; whereupon the rest showed themselves also, and, acknowledging their fault, begged to be allowed to continue the journey as far as the convent.

* * *

Very soon we saw some painted tchitens, and came to a convent which likewise bears the name of Hemis. It is the chief monastery in Ladak, the place of residence of the head lama. The building is very large, and surrounded by trees, and over the gate can be seen a large painted figure of Buddha. Behind the convent, on a high rock, stands a village. The lamas welcomed us with some tea, dried apricots, a dish of rice, and meat, mixed with a great deal of hair. They



MONASTERY OF HEMIS.

showed us a very dirty, marshy place on the bank of the little river. We had scarcely settled ourselves down here in a tent when I was seized with an attack of fever. My husband immediately induced the people in the convent to let me have one of their rooms. The monks immediately dragged away the wool which was drying in the neighbourhood of the room, and which smelt very strongly, cleaned it, and put everything in order; and after many weeks of nomad existence in a tent, we found ourselves once more under a roof in a pleasant room, out of which opened a balcony.

However, the fever returned again here, and every day at precisely three o'clock it visited me. Another visitor, but a less unwelcome one, was the oldest lama of the convent, a deaf man, to whom the interpreter was obliged to shout very loud, and whose visits were therefore very noisy. The lama brought us, in place of bread and salt, grapes and 'panshala,' *i.e.* sand-sugar, as tokens of hospitality.

The worthy monk told us that he had been advised of our coming, and had therefore purposely put off for some days a journey to Thibet, whither he wished to go in order to make his report to the oldest lama who resides there.

When, towards evening, the fever left me, we

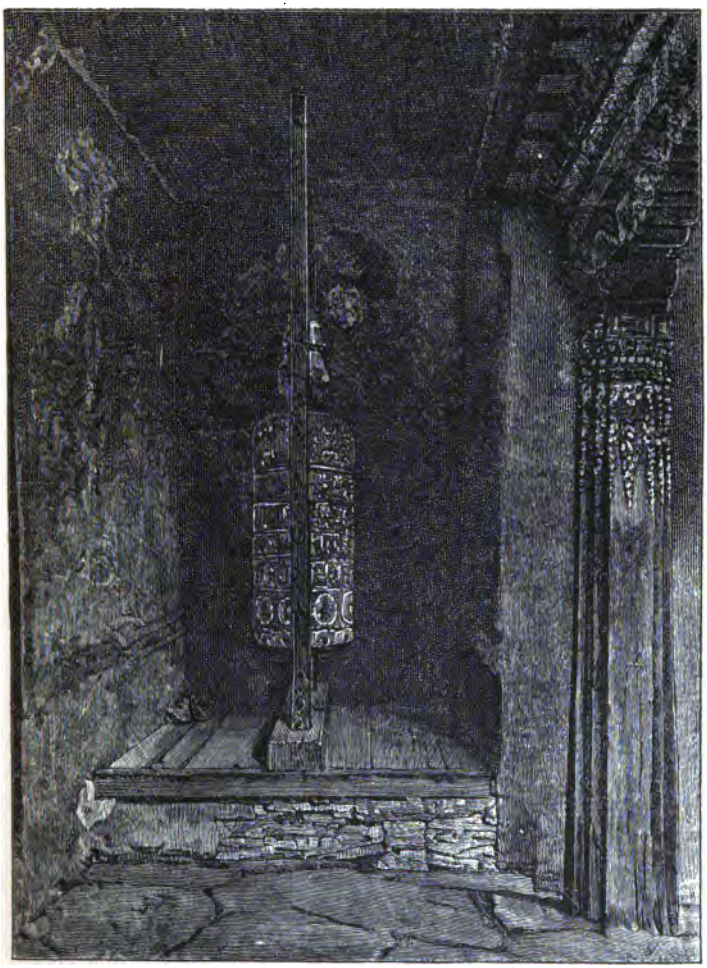
went to see the several temples, of which there are altogether ten here, large and small. In two of

ONE OF THE VESTIBULES IN THE MONASTERY OF HEMIS.

them service was going on. There were but few of the congregation who did not belong to the convent. In the corner a monk was beating a drum and muttering prayers; at his side sat two lamas, one occupied in dividing the contributions received, the other distributing them. The contributions consisted of meal and beer. Cups were constantly filled and emptied; they prayed, ate, drank, sang, beat the drum, clinked copper plates, prayed again, and so on. We did not wait till the end. These various occupations did not hinder the lamas from watching us curiously. The temple is somewhat richly ornamented, its walls being nearly covered with banners and sacred pictures on silk.

In another temple, underneath our room, a silver tchiten stands on the altar, inlaid with lapis lazuli, cornelian, and other precious stones; the chains on each side of it are of gold. This valuable, but frightfully tasteless, piece of furniture appears to be the pride of the monks. The idols are richly decorated. In front of the statue of the oldest lama, now dead, burns a lamp—a little clay vessel, with a large piece of fat and a wick. In a gallery hang the portraits of all the people who have worked in the interests of this convent. In a special room stands a praying-machine. The convent appears to have been very rich in former

times. The wing in which we live was built two hundred and forty years ago; the other wing



PRAYING-MACHINE

eighty years. Our wing is rather dilapidated, and the rooms are propped up in several places. The inhabitants of the monastery are a hundred lamas and a great many pupils; their business is to eat and to pray, to pray and to eat. When the gifts of believers fail, they seem to live in a very poor way. When the manager of the convent was distributing pieces of dough, unground grains of corn were very prominent. In all the windows there are curtains.

In the yard, which extends the whole length of the convent, are high poles, on which are hung pieces of white stuff inscribed with prayers. The wind blows these prayers to and fro and wafts them to heaven. On the points of the poles are fastened yaks' tails, which are supposed to be the attributes of power. The style of the building is original; the walls are not vertical, but a little sloped; the roof is well covered with straw, and on it are 'genshi,' or round knobs of different materials, likewise decorated with yaks' tails.

We were informed that the oldest lama in the monastery, who is immortal, lived here first three hundred years ago, and has already been born again six times in Ladak and once in Thibet: at present he lives in Lhassa. Being regarded as the late abbot come to life again, he is still the head

of the convent, but it appears advantageous to the chief lama of Thibet to detain him there in order to keep for himself the gifts and contributions from Ladak. We asked them how they executed their religious dances, in order to know whether they were like those which we had seen in Sikkim. We found scarcely any difference, except that the dancers have richer costumes, but less skill: it may have been that the greatest masters in the art were not in the convent just at that time. My husband tried here also to buy several specially characteristic costumes, and other things, but the lamas displayed so little readiness to meet his wishes that he gave up the idea. The lamas assured him that if they were to sell anything no one would come to the convent to pray. My husband gave them some money for their trouble. Out of several sketches which he made here, one especially was very successful, representing half the convent in shadow while the upper half is partially in light. Another study also was not bad, in which there is a dark door in a yellow wall, with a scholar fallen asleep over his book on the doorstep.

* * *

While here we received our letters and newspapers from Srinagur. The last part of the time

there was a violent wind, and we continued our journey, taking advantage of the cool weather. The evening before our departure, it being a holiday, the monks ceaselessly and zealously blew great copper horns, which did not exactly obey them, but only gave out of themselves hoarse, melancholy notes. We gave to the Lombardar and the monks various presents, such as looking-glasses, knives, &c., with which we had provided ourselves in St. Petersburg ; but they did not seem satisfied—probably because they preferred money. It may here be remarked that we had made a great mistake in providing ourselves in St. Petersburg with every possible thing that could be given as a present, for all these things can easily be procured in Bombay or Calcutta ; and, after all, no present is so acceptable as money. The intention of my husband to make use of this opportunity for the display of Russian products was scarcely practicable, for no one took any notice of the Russian stamp on the glasses, knives, scissors, and other objects. But to call attention to the Russian stamp was an unpleasant thing to do in these countries, which are subject to English influence, as the English were always distrustful, and everywhere took us for spies, surveying the country for military purposes.

* * *

From Hemis, after a ride of about six miles, we reached the convent of Tchimri, which stands on the highest point of a rock. The lama and his pupil, who came out of the convent to meet us, observed us with great attention. The worthy man had put a chamber in readiness for us; but we had not intended to stop here, and refused it with thanks. Round the convent and the village, which lies at the foot of the rock on which the convent stands, may be seen the remains of walls —another proof that the houses of piety in former times, when robbery and brigandage flourished here, were used also as fortresses.

My husband here made a great noise and bestowed a blow upon the lombardar instead of the gratuity expected by him. At first they would give us no horses at all, because they pretended there were none at hand; then horses were brought round, but slowly one after another disappeared again behind the bushes and trees. However, the energetic interference of my husband reduced everything to order.

* * *

From the convent the road goes over a pass of eighteen thousand feet in height. When we went through the village of Sakti, which lies just at the

place where the ascent begins, a large black dog of the Thibet breed ran out to meet my husband, who was riding on in front; it was of the same kind as those we saw at Captain Molloy's, but with longer, thicker hair, and very much resembled a small bear. We had long intended to purchase a dog of this kind. At first the owner of this one would not hear of selling him, but finally handed him over to us for eight rupees, and as the Buddhists have the idea that punished human souls live in animals, he would not let the dog go without a preliminary ceremony of cursing. He laid half of his clothes on the head of the dog, said a prayer, plucked a little hair, and called to us in parting not to hold the dog by a rope, because, however thick and strong it was, he would be sure to bite it through. In the memory of his birthplace we called the dog Sakti.

* * *

The higher we climbed the more our people complained of headache. We ourselves felt pains in the head, though as we were riding and our people were on foot (for there was only one horse available for those who were tired) the rarity of the atmosphere affected them more. The kansaman cried like a child with headache; besides this

it was cold, as we were wrapped in clouds all the way. Our resting-place lay at a height of sixteen thousand feet. We had scarcely reached it when all our people threw themselves down on the ground, and not one of them would obey the orders to put up the tent, to fetch water, &c. My husband lifted his cane, and then, but not till then, they all jumped up and went about their work.

Here we met a goat-caravan which was going from Tchong in Thibet to Tchimri. Each goat carried a little bag of salt on its back. For this purpose the wool on their backs and sides was shorn, so that the animals looked as if they had little trousers on. The salt goes to Leh to the Rajah's magazine, which has a monopoly of salt, as is the case in the greater part of the independent native states. Another caravan, a yak caravan, went before us from Tchimri to Tchong with meal. The yaks are not of large size; their nostrils are pierced through like those of camels with a wooden pin, to which the rein is tied.

* * *

The last eight miles of the ascent from our resting-place to the top of the pass are very difficult, because the road is blocked with stones and snow.

On the top, as usual, is a pole with a piece of

stuff inscribed with prayers on it. Our bearers offered up a prayer of thanks for our safe ascent before the pole.

The day before a rock had fallen down, and lay close by the road, which is very wide, and, as has already been said, a hardly passable chaos of stones and snow. The noise of the falling of this rock was heard far and wide.

There are many wolves here, which is explained by the fact that many animals fall exhausted on the pass. A wolf ran by before our eyes, and looked to see whether we had not left anything for him.

As soon as we had passed by a small lake the descent began. Properly we ought to have halted by the water; but the relief we felt in going down hill gave us strength, and we accomplished this day twenty-nine miles in twelve hours. We made a halt at a height of thirteen thousand feet.

* * *

At first I very cautiously offered a piece of bread to our dog Sakti, who was running behind us, but soon found that Sakti is a very good and friendly animal. In the night he barks unceasingly, so that one's sleep is disturbed. In the first instance the noise of the caravan bells disturbed

his equanimity, and now so soon as he hears it he begins from habit to bark without stopping, and becomes very furious. His instinct is remarkable. People told us on the way that there are still better dogs in this country, but when we wanted to know where they were, they always pointed to a village which lay before us, but we did not find any there.

* * *

We reached Tanktse, a large place, but very ill-supplied with food; and found we had done well to provide ourselves with fowls and mutton in Hemis. However, we took a cow and calf from here with us, in order to have fresh milk on the way.

Intercourse with the inhabitants now became difficult, and Lodi, our interpreter, was often angry because they could not understand him well. We rested half-way near a little freshwater lake, where we shot and ate a large well-flavoured duck.

* * *

The next station is Pengong, a salt lake, which was the furthest limit of our journey along the Thibet frontier. My husband rode forward to look out for a good place to halt.

We were astonished at the colour of the water; it looked so blue in front of us that I could not at once believe it was water that lay before me. As we approached the lake we saw that it was bordered by a line of white sand, and surrounded by snow-mountains more than twenty thousand feet high; on the right-hand side there are also high rocks hanging over the water. The water is salt and bitter, to which perhaps it owes its wonderful blue colour. There are no fish here; the sand all round looks blue. My husband began to make a sketch here, but in the midst of his work a whirlwind arose, blew over the sketch, the palette, and the colour-box; so that he had to put it aside. We ought to have made our halt on the north-east side of the lake, near the mouth of a little river, for there was grass there, and several trees, and the official station for travellers and caravans going to the Tchangchenjin Valley and over the mountain pass to Turkestan; but as we had from here to turn southwards along the west shore, we preferred our sandy halting-place, where the sand made its way into our clothes, our boxes, and even our food.

The lake is about two hundred miles long.

In the evening at sunset, when the water is half of an ultramarine-blue colour, and the other

half sky-blue, bordered with the yellow-red strip of shore, it is a wonderful sight.

Our interpreter, Lodi, fell ill of a fever here, of which my husband cured him, by giving him hot drinks, covering him up to his head, and, as soon as he began to perspire, dosing him with quinine.

* * *

My husband made another sketch of the lake. On the following day we went forty-six miles on the western shore, to Mentse, a little village consisting of a few houses. The whole female population came out to receive us; they were decorated with ornaments of silver and turquoise, and wore very thick jackets and goatskins, to which were added pieces of stuff on the upper half of their bodies, as a protection against the cold occasioned by the neighbourhood of the glaciers. As we were informed, all the men work for some neighbouring small rajah. My fever returned here, but the influence of quinine soon overcame it. I did not like to subject myself to such violent remedies as had been applied to Lodi, though I had seen how effective they were.

We had received from Molloy two young Shiite *sayces* (grooms), who were covered with rags, wore long ringlets, and looked very stupid. Our groom

from Srinagur at once took upon himself to act as their chief, and dealt out blows to them with a liberal hand.

* * *

My husband shot a good many ducks, and painted a yak-caravan which was carrying salt. Then we travelled on to the station of Shoshal. For several miles further our road lay along the shore of the lake, and then we took leave of it. At this stage of our journey we saw several wild horses (*kiangs*), which graze here in herds, principally in little woods at the mouth of the river which discharges into the south-west end of the lake.

We cannot undertake to decide whether these are really wild horses from which the present breed of tame horses is descended, or whether they are domesticated ponies that have run wild; but we rather incline to the former belief, for this reason among others, viz. that these kiangs resemble the animals of the Belovestcha forest in Russia, which cannot, as far as is known, be tamed at all, and will not live in captivity. The horses are of a reddish grey colour, the neck, the underside, and part of the head being white; the nose, the back, and the tail are like those of mules, but

the legs are like those of our horses. Their quickness, activity, and dexterity are striking; one can only compare them to the stag or the wild-goat. They seemed to be not ill-disposed to make acquaintance with our ponies; our horses, too, pricked up their ears, but the alarm inspired by human beings was too great, and they sprang away from us. My husband tried several times to shoot them as they galloped away, but without success. He placed mounted coolies on all four sides; but the animals sprang between them and fled like the wind. Once my husband fell into a deep little stream during a chase after these horses; the kiang also plunged into the water, swam across it, gained the opposite shore, and disappeared, while my husband was nearly drowned. He got back to me dripping, and gave up the chase, though he would have liked to secure one of the animals on account of the skin. On the Arab horse which he had on the Indian plains, and which was as swift as a wild-goat, he might possibly have succeeded, but our ponies got out of breath after quite a short run.

* * *

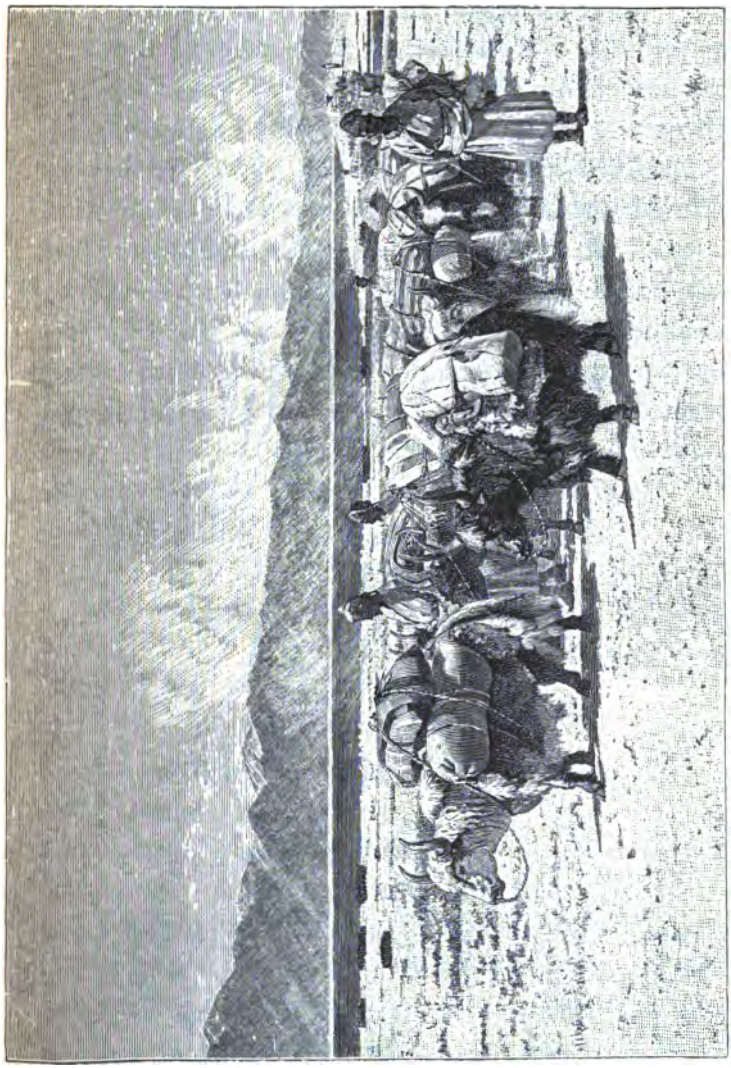
While we were here the gnats began to annoy us very much. We only changed yaks, while the

bearers remained the same from Tanktse onwards, because in the places on the road there are very few people. On the way we saw stones on which were sheep's horns and little banners, just as they are found in the steppes of Turkestan. Our bearers did not omit to offer up prayers at these holy places.

Our sheep was the cause of no little laughter and vexation, for, contrary to our order, it was not led by a rope, but ran loose beside us; it ran now in this direction and now in that, and so quickly that our people were nearly exhausted with trying to catch it. They did so in a barbarous manner, namely, by breaking its leg with a stone.

I know no more useful animals than the yaks of this country: they give a rich milk of a pleasant flavour, and are good at every kind of work, and on the road their foresight and perseverance are invaluable. The young ones are sold at fifteen to twenty rupees, the full-grown from twenty to twenty-five. Horses are more expensive; the horses, for instance, for which we had paid twenty to thirty rupees in Srinagur cost fifty here. A good strong ass costs twenty rupees, and an inferior one fourteen or fifteen.

Rupees are of pure silver, but in Cashmere are



YAK-CARAVAN.

very badly stamped; they are equivalent to ten annas instead of sixteen as in India, and brought us into many difficulties. Many a time people tried to cheat us with this money. The *lombardar* (village magistrate) at the last village positively refused to take the rupee for more than nine annas. To us this was of course indifferent, but our people grumbled at it. My husband then had recourse to more energetic means. He had the lombardar brought in, and asked him again whether he would take the money. When he refused my husband gave him a box on the ear. 'Will you take the money at its proper value?' 'No.' A second box on the ear. 'Will you now?' 'Yes, yes,' cried the alarmed lombardar, 'I will take it.' I must relate this incident, although we are somewhat ashamed of it.

* * *

From here we came to high-lying places, where there were plenty of partridges and hares. We ate them so frequently that we got quite tired of them. My husband after this actually caught a whole family of black game after he had shot the parent birds; one of the hares which we thought we had shot jumped up just as we were going to pick it up, ran away, and is still running.

My husband had here a sharp touch of fever. He recovered, however, by means of perspiration and quinine, and on the following day we continued our journey. Although we were at a considerable height we felt the July heat a good deal in the middle of the day, and all the more so as the country is in many parts very stony and barren. We passed by the little lake of Mirtso, or the Dead Sea, which lies in a desolate situation between bare rocks, and whose waters are slightly salt and of a shimmering blue colour. The country round is so uninviting that we could not even put up our tent on the stony ground, and were obliged to seek a more suitable resting-place farther on. We again went over a high pass, where wild horses were grazing, which, to all appearances, are only to be met with on considerable heights—never less than fourteen thousand feet. We were troubled again here with headache. In the night it snowed, and the tents became extremely cold.

* * *

We now travel to another salt lake, which goes by the name of Tso-morari (*tso* means water), and shall soon have to cross the river Indus. We are occupied with the important question whether

this celebrated river has a passable ford or not. Some affirm that it has; others contradict the assertion.

Leaving a very wild ravine, I overtook my husband on a splendid green plain, by a fresh-water lake, where he had shot four geese and four large ducks, which we could hardly carry in our travelling-bags. We had breakfast in the meadow among the cows and bulls grazing there, and reached the Indus towards evening. The impression was unfavourable, as the river is broad and deep, and flows very rapidly. My husband sent one of the tallest and strongest of our people to sound the depth of the river after he had tied a rope round his waist; but the moment he left the shore he was out of his depth, so that they had to quickly pull him up again. Evidently to attempt to ford the river was not to be thought of. The lombardar of the neighbouring village promised to lend us a raft made of inflated sheepskins, but not till the following day.

Left without occupation, we remembered that we had fishing-nets with us, and began to fish. We caught and ate ten fair-sized fish.

The raft was made, as I have already said, of sheep- and goat-skins, well inflated, and bound fast together; on these, closely joined planks were

laid. We crossed in perfect safety, together with our baggage, to the opposite shore; but our dog turned back after he had swum half-way across the river, and could not be got to come with us till he was tied on to the raft. We discharged our bearers here when we had secured new ones, which we did not do without some trouble, because here also the natives dislike that work.

We passed by a salt-factory. In former times, the salt, which is not particularly good, was taken a great distance into India; but at present the demand is not great. In the neighbourhood also there are sulphur-manufactories, where women and children chiefly are employed, who receive an anna per day. About forty persons are employed there altogether. There are said also to be hot sulphur-springs close by, but we did not look for them as we did not wish to leave the road.

* * *

There are many geese also on Lake Tso-morari. My husband shot some hares. We settled ourselves down near a small village in the immediate vicinity of the glacier. The lake is small and the water not so blue as the Pengong Lake; it also is shut in by mountains covered with everlasting snow.

Not far from us two English officers, who were on a hunting expedition, had pitched their tent. They went about on foot, only accompanied by two bearers, and did not seem to have had very good sport.

We had met them already on the banks of the Indus, where they had made use of our raft. My husband exchanged a few words with them, and supplied them with newspapers after they had informed us that they had already been three months without reading anything. When the courier from Leh brought us our fresh newspapers, we lent them to the hunters as soon as we had read them ourselves. Probably in order to show us some attention on their side, they sent us two pigeons. But we hardly knew how to dispose of all our pigeons, ducks, and geese. The two officers soon disappeared from sight, so that we could lend them no more newspapers.

At evening we enjoyed the sight of a wonderful sunset; the bare rocky mountain peaks glowed as if they were on fire.

* * *

Our new grooms had lost some money. Suspicion fell on a groom named Rasaka, from Cashmere, whom we already knew to be a rogue. My

husband gave him his wages and dismissed him. The men who had been robbed, however, received a month's wages as a consolation. Rasaka took leave of the other bearers and departed, but late in the night he came back secretly and frightened the horses, so that they stampeded. As soon as

GUIDE.

the grooms had hurried away to catch them, the rogue cut from their clothes the money which they kept sewn into them. After that Rasaka attempted also to rob us. Our dog, who lay in the part of the tent where our boxes were, growled

and barked several times during the night, in spite of our attempts to soothe him, as if he was trying to spring on some one. When, the next morning, we learnt of the grooms' loss, it was clear to us that Sakti had rendered us a great service. The grief of the grooms knew no bounds; one of them even cried, beat himself on the cheek, and tore his hair so violently that we had to comfort him like a child, and to assure him that the money would certainly be found again, though we were not at all convinced that it would be. My husband wrote at once to Molloy at Leh, and to Henderson at Srinagur, sent them a description of the thief, and begged them to apprehend him if possible.

* * *

After we had gone a distance of about twelve miles from the little village of Rakshu we stayed at the end of the lake, where there were lots of geese, and my husband shot a good many; but we could not get them out of the water, because there was no boat, and our dog was afraid of the water. On the following day a gentle north wind brought them upon the shore to us. We prepared ourselves a soup, an entrée, and a roast from the geese, and were still obliged to throw away half.

* * *

Our cook, Lal-khan, fell sick here, and complained of headache and pains in the limbs; at evening he broke out into hysterical crying. On the following day, when our courier returned from Leh, we observed that the cook and he were engaged in some lengthy transaction. When the cook had gone to bed again we learnt that Lal-khan, who was in the habit of taking opium twice a day, had lost his little bag of opium, and the subject of his conversation with the postillion was the replenishment of his store of the precious drug.

The cook was seized with feverish shuddering; his eyes stared, and he could scarcely articulate. We commissioned Lodi to follow the course of the illness, and he faithfully reported to us how the sick man was going on. He stuck his head into the tent and called out, 'Madame, he keeps beckoning with his hand.'

'Well, come again soon and report how he is.'

'Madame, he has begun to breathe very hard.'

'Well.'

'Madame, his head has quite sunk down on one side; he grinds his teeth and calls "Allah! Allah!"'

'Madame, his eyes are quite distorted. I am afraid he is dying.'

What was to be done now?

As it appeared, the cook had been in the habit of taking pure opium morning and evening for four years. For a long time he tossed his head from side to side, shut and opened his mouth, complained of internal pains, and spit blood. We had no means of helping him, for Leh lay six days' journey behind us. My husband gave him an opium-pill out of our travelling medicine chest, but such a small dose as this could do very little to improve his condition. The next day, we gave him some tea, and some strong tobacco to smoke, and he felt somewhat better.

* * *

My husband hunted here, and we again saw some wild horses.

We went on to the river Parang, which flows into the lake. In crossing the river the women who were driving the yaks held up their clothes higher than the sense of propriety even in Ladak permits, and thereby greatly delighted our grooms. The hair of these lads had not yet grown again after their recent mourning, and yet they winked their eyes and licked their tongues when our ill-favoured female companions uncovered their knees.

These ladies certainly stole the milk from our

GIRL OF LADAK.

cow, and declared, when we asked why there was such a small quantity of it :

'God has not given the cow any more!'

As we were convinced that they had taken the milk for their porridge and only brought us the remainder, my husband again had recourse to one of his violent remedies. He poured the milk over the dirty dishevelled hair of the worthy dame who brought it, with a threat to repeat this operation if the stealing of the milk should be repeated. The woman took it very good-naturedly, laughed, and brought us much more milk the next day.

The weather is cloudy, which is a good thing in some ways. However, it is very cold. The neighbourhood of the snow-covered pass makes itself felt.

* * * *

After a short rest we came to the pass of Parang, where a river of the same name flows out of the glacier. My husband here began to make a sketch, the conclusion of which was prevented by constant rain mingled with snow.

We now began the ascent. One of the bearers complained of pains in the foot, which was really sore, but we could not leave him behind unless we

NATIVES OF LADAK.

were willing to throw away our things. At first we went over ice; then through deep snow, in which our horses sank every moment up to their middles, and were only able to work themselves out again with incredible exertion. The weather was cloudy; all around was white; the yellowish atmosphere melted into the whiteness of the snow which lay spread out all around. I became so dazzled by it that the servant who was walking close to my palanquin seemed to be far away; the rest of our people and my husband, who were on in front, I could scarcely distinguish. There was something awful in this boundless expanse of snow, and in the silence which surrounded us. We wondered how the guide who went first could distinguish the road, since neither under our feet nor at the sides was the least sign visible. Without guides we should certainly have died in the snow. Notwithstanding the great height—about nineteen thousand feet—no one complained of headache; but we were all frightfully cold, and were nearly frozen—of course I do not mean the natives, to whom such experiences are nothing new.

One of our horses followed us with great difficulty—less on account of being exhausted than because it had had nothing to drink for two or even three days. When my husband took it to some

water it would hardly leave it: it drank and drank and drank. The groom received a box on the ear for his negligence, as the horse was nearly dying.

* * *

The descent of this pass was as hard a day's work as any that we had on the whole journey. The road, which is terribly steep, lies over endless rocks and stones. It goes in short zigzags up the same mountain from top to bottom, so that the whole can easily be seen at a glance. Our sick horse, which with difficulty kept on its legs, very nearly fell down the precipice. I had already closed my eyes in horror, so as not to see the catastrophe, when one of our people saved it from falling. After spending the night close to the foot of the descent we continued our journey to the province of Spiti on horseback. The bridges here are very primitive, being made of a few logs on which stones are scattered, which, however, fall into the water under the horse's feet.

The path is so overgrown with long grass that here also it would be impossible to find the way without a guide. Very soon we had a view of the village of Kiwar. The dress of the men of Spiti is the same as of those in Ladak; the women, however, wear white trousers, a black tunic, and many orna-

ments round their necks and in their ears. The men here are less savage, taller, and rather better-looking, although their features also are strongly Mongolian in type.

The houses are better outside and cleaner inside.

When we got near Kiwar the bearers agreed among themselves, probably because they were afraid we should compel them to go farther, to leave me and my palanquin, and did actually run away.

Some monks from the convent of Ki to whom we applied carried me on farther; and I must confess they accomplished the six or seven miles with great good-humour.

CHAPTER III.

THE monastery of Ki is perched high up on a rock. This place was doubly interesting to us—first, as a convent; and, secondly, because we had here an opportunity of seeing a fine dog of the Thibet breed. Some time before this, on the road from Hemis, we had met an English sportsman who came from Simla. When he saw Sakti he had a conversation with my husband about dogs, and told him that he had only seen good ones at the convent of Ki (*ki* means dog), and that the dog which guards the entrance there is a very peculiar animal with a great lion's mane. Now that we had reached Ki we were much interested in seeing this curiosity. We were just approaching the entrance, when an old monk came out and, with the words, 'Take care: there is a fierce dog here,' ran to a shed in which a dog of a red colour, and apparently old, was showing its teeth and preparing to spring upon us. The lion's mane of which we had heard hung in hanks round

its neck and far down its back, which gave the dog an unusually savage appearance.

'Will you sell me the dog?' said my husband.

The monks were horrified. 'What do you want him for?'

'Well, I want him.'

'The dog is fierce, and is seven years old already.'

'A fierce dog is just what I want. Sell him to me.'

At last the monks consented, and demanded ten rupees. We called the dog 'Ki' in memory of his native rock.

When Sakti approached his new companion for the first time in order to smell at him, as from time immemorial has been the custom among well-trained dogs, the new dog sprang upon him, threw him on the ground, and bit him severely. It would indeed have been difficult to find a fiercer dog than this, so that we were quite contented with our purchase.

* * *

The natives are Buddhists, though the influence of India and of Brahminism is already perceptible. For instance, they were afraid to touch our food; when we wished to give one of the inhabitants in

the village of Rukshu a piece of meat, he could not help showing his horror by spitting. Higher up in the mountains the Buddhists are not so particular, and eat anything, with the exception of snakes, rats, and cats.

* * *

The bearers gave us a great deal of trouble here; for as they would not carry the baggage further than from one village to the next, even though the distance from village to village were only one or two miles, they had to be changed very frequently. Many of our things, in consequence of this frequent and therefore careless packing and unpacking, were of course injured and spoiled. The coolies here bring their wives with them, who seem to be accustomed to work for themselves and their husbands also. The women carried the heavier burdens and the men the lighter ones.

The women wear broad round rings of silver or bone, and on their arms bracelets of white mussel-shells with bells and tassels. They are not tall, but lively and cheerful in character.

An ass is called here *pung*; a horse *ta*; and a dog, as I have already said, *ki*.

* * *

The rocks here begin to be covered with bushes and grass, which is very restful to eyes which are wearied with perpetual stones and sand. We are rapidly leaving the heights, and hope soon to see woods, for which we have quite a longing. Captain Molloy had informed us that he would send our post, which would be the last one, to the village of Charichan. This village certainly lies on the direct road to Simla; but we were told that the way to it was difficult for horses, so that we should be obliged to go a long way round.

* * *

Of Dankar, the capital of Spiti, we had already heard a good deal. Whenever we were short of anything on the way, or anything got broken, we were always consoled by the assurance that it could be bought or mended in Dankar. As we now found, this capital consists of ten little houses perched on a high rock. The houses are certainly clean, regularly built of stone, and having a number of little windows. Near the village stand a convent and a small fortress, which are hardly worthy of mention.

The lombardar was not at home when we called. His assistant appeared to be very stupid, and the lama, who tried to remove the misunder-

standings which arose, still more stupid. The wife of the lombardar came to our assistance—a resolute woman adorned with silver ornaments; she procured food for us and fodder for the horses, fresh bearers, and finally several fresh ponies, as some of ours were quite exhausted.

I mounted my horse; my husband took his seat on a yak; but we soon had to exchange, because my animal once more found himself constrained to play various tricks at dangerous parts of the road.

About nine miles farther on lay a village, where a Buddhist temple stood under a very high tree. A little door leads into the ante-chamber, which is ornamented with paintings, and where it is so dark that one can with difficulty distinguish anything. On the right stands a statue, of the Devil himself, or one of his assistants—at any rate, of a very furious creature; on the left is the god of war with a crown made of skulls. One leg is longer than the other, and the face is distorted. There are various other figures there; in each corner stands a statue, and behind the altar, in the darkness, a very large idol.

All about lay various things—books, candlesticks, vessels, and different papers, but above all vast quantities of dust. One must conclude from the want of cleanliness in the temples that the

people are not particularly attached to their religion. In this also the weakness of Buddhism shows itself, that the nearer one approaches to places inhabited by Brahmins the more frequent become the figures of their deities.

For instance, one meets with Vishnu, with an elephant's body and head, long before one has reached the dwelling-places of the Brahmins. In some places we saw caves which, one must conclude, are ancient and were once dwelt in by the people who afterwards settled down in the houses.

* * *

We received information from Molloy that Rasaka was caught and had been put in prison ; also, that the stolen money had been found on him. This news not only rejoiced our grooms, but ourselves also, because it could not be denied that the shameless theft had a bad influence upon our people, who seemed silently to acquiesce in the knavery of their former comrade.

Before the village of Lara we came to a river which, though not at all wide, was very rapid, and we saw no way of crossing it. The descent to the river was difficult enough, the road was so steep, and sand and small crumbling stones rolled from under our feet down the slope. The village lies

exactly beyond the river, and the inhabitants are bound to assist travellers to cross it. After we had shouted for a long time, three men at length appeared. We were standing on an overhanging perpendicular rock close above the water on the left bank, which is frightfully steep. Our coolies loosened the cords from our baggage, and twisted them into a thick rope, which they first passed through a hole in a plank, and then stretched across the river and made fast at each end. Those who wish to cross the river are fastened to this plank, and so conveyed to the other side.

My husband was the first to be drawn across. He held fast to the plank—I saw how pale he became—and went quickly sliding along the rope to the opposite shore. Then the little plank was drawn back, and I was tied to it. I must confess I was very much frightened. When they bound me they advised me to lean firmly on the plank, and wanted to bind my eyes. I could hear the water foaming and rushing beneath me, and pushed them all back—I know not how I had the strength—and declared with determination that I would not make use of such a barbarous contrivance. What was to be done now? My husband from that side and Lodi from this side of the river exhorted me to make up my mind to it. At last

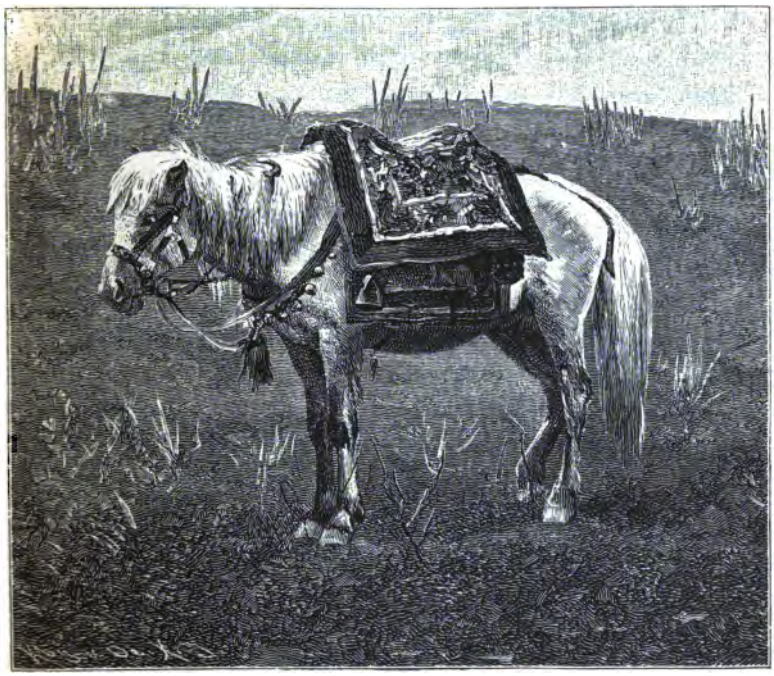
I consented. They bound me on the plank and bandaged my eyes. When they lowered me from the rock I tried to resist, but it was already too late: I was hanging over the river, and lost all consciousness. My husband told me afterwards that Lodi was terribly frightened, and called out to him:

'Sir, we must stop: Madame has fainted!'

'On the contrary, so much the better,' answered my husband, sharply; 'let her down more quickly.'

How they got me across I do not know; when I came to myself I was on the sand on the opposite lower bank. The dogs were especially comical when they were tied to the plank by their necks. They seemed to be extremely uncomfortable, for when they came to the shore their tongues were hanging out, and they had to be rubbed and given something to drink. The horses were sent into the water with loud cries higher up the stream, and driven on by having stones thrown at them; they only crossed the river with difficulty. My Cashmere pony was nearly drowned. The stream had nearly carried him down to the place where we had accomplished our crossing, and the water, on account of the number of stones, was very much broken. I and all the others followed him with beating hearts. He tried to support himself on a stone, but was swept away. There was now

only a little interval before him; behind him the strong current and destruction. He got a foothold, tottered a little, but held himself upright;



ONE OF OUR PONIES.

and we breathed freely, for the pony was saved. Our sick horse was so weak that he could not be driven into the water. We therefore resolved to shoot him; to which, also, our desire to regale

ourselves on horseflesh contributed, instead of the thoroughly bad mutton, for which we had quite a loathing.

Our people did not wish to eat the flesh, because Lodi, who was not a Mussulman, had killed it, and had not cut the animal's throat and reserved the blood as an offering to the Deity, which according to the Mussulman law is the first condition of the purity of the food. The natives, although they were Buddhists, with difficulty could make up their minds to bring us both the hind-legs of the horse. We ate them, partly in soup, partly as beefsteaks; and the latter prepared with onions tasted better than anything we had had for a long time.

In this village we had another conflict on the subject of milk, because bad goat's milk was sold to us for cow's milk, and at a high price.

Not far from here is a pass thirteen thousand feet high. We had scarcely begun to climb up it when one of our bearers threw away his burden at a bend of the road and hid himself. My husband again took very decided measures; two young and very pretty nuns who were coming to meet us were stopped, and he proposed to them to drive our yaks. The drivers, who thus became free, were set to carry the things. Probably out of pity, our

people let the nuns run away from us at the top of the pass, and divided the things among themselves; which arrangement they would not hear of before. This was just what my husband wanted. The nuns, whose skin was quite white, lived in a little place called Paja, where the nunnery stands, close to a monastery. One of the nuns was particularly pretty; and we laughed not a little when one of our grooms, forgetting his own unpleasing figure and clothing, began to flirt with her.

After we had crossed the pass we had still to climb up and down many times before we came to a village, where there was a great quantity of peach and apricot trees; the fruit was being dried just at that time in the streets and on the roofs.

The next station, Tchongo, is a large village, surrounded by a great many fields, and has a primitive ill-constructed bridge, which nearly broke under us. The natives here begin to be decidedly more civilized; some musicians came to play to us, and wished us to enjoy the music while we were resting; but we were tired after our march of some fifteen miles, and declined the concert.

On the following morning we were on the road betimes, rested in a little village on a steep rock, breakfasted in a Buddhist temple, from thence climbed down to the river, and came, after crossing

an old bridge, to a place called Lio, which is within the boundaries of the province of Tchini. The men and women here wear little felt hats, and under their skirts the women wear very wide trousers. The women are remarkably pretty. Provisions are considerably dearer here; milk is very difficult to procure, and meal is dear, which was very disagreeable to our people. It is still more difficult to get yaks and bearers; the latter run away from the houses and hide themselves, one may find them if one can.

My husband again had recourse to his energetic measures. He collected all the old men, who, convinced that they need not fear being pressed into the service, had remained in their houses. What my husband had foreseen took place: the sons of the old men immediately appeared in order to set them free from the burdens and to carry the things themselves.

This time also we were not without rogues in our company. A red-haired fellow, who had come instead of his father, threw his burden down before our eyes and ran away from it. My husband ran after him; he scrambled on to a rock; my husband did the same; both hurried along, jumping from stone to stone. The fugitive lost his mantle and his cap, but succeeded in making

his escape. The conclusion of this interlude was that the other bearers prepared to follow the example set them. My husband now turned to his last resource : he drew out his little pocket revolver and declared he would put a bullet in the backs of the absconders. The revolver was certainly very small, and the bullets only about the size of grains of corn ; but the threat did its work, and we continued our journey without further misadventures of this sort. About half way I dismounted in order to go a little way on foot. My yak, a strong beautiful animal, such as one seldom sees in our zoological gardens, gave me such a kick that at first I thought my foot was broken. My husband, who was riding behind, found me sitting on a stone and crying bitterly with the intense pain. The adventure had, however, no evil consequences.

* * *

At the village of Hangu we met a procession of Buddhist pilgrims, who were going solemnly along with a staff ornamented with coloured stuff on the top of which hung a fur cap. In front of this original kind of banner a pilgrim was dancing. As we had the want of forethought to give them some money, they took up their position in front of our tent, and wearied us

with their dancing, till my husband called out, 'Abi-jan!' (Hold: get along with you!) Without appearing at all offended the party went off laughing.

Our old friends the lamas can still be met with here; but the religion of the place already has a large admixture of Brahminism, and among the natives not a few Hindoos are to be found.

The houses, the outsides of which do not look bad, are like those in Srinagur; they have galleries, balconies, and many windows. The shape of the men's hats reminded us very much of the hats we saw in Italy.

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At the station of Sungun my husband obtained a costume of the country. The lombardar, or headman, showed himself to be a very attentive man, for he brought us apples, pears, and pumpkins as a present. According to his assertion, the natives of the Province of Spiti are very lazy and do not work; when it comes to the payment of their taxes, they bring their horses, the best of which are worth four or five hundred rupees, and the worst eighty, into the neighbouring provinces to sell. They sell their ponies in the province which borders Thibet, but with small profit, and exchange

them principally for amber, turquoises, yaks' tails, and good wool.

The relations between the provinces of Tchini and Spiti are so unfriendly that even intermarriage is very rare. From here the country begins to be wooded, but not thickly. The village of Sungun is the largest we have seen on our way; it possesses three hundred houses, and fifteen or twenty inhabitants may be reckoned to each house.

The features and the customs of the natives here begin to remind us of the Hindoos; the temple is certainly Buddhist, but with Brahminical additions; so that one must conclude that the natives will soon completely go over to Brahminism. The increase of this religion and the decrease of Buddhism, which was once paramount in India, but now only asserts itself in Ceylon and in the Himalaya Mountains, is still going on. The lombardar told us that polyandry has never been very strongly developed here, and latterly has completely disappeared (?).

In Spiti the poor people are thrown into the river directly they are dead, but the rich are buried; here, however, both rich and poor are cremated, because a dead body here, as on the great Indian plain, inspires horror. We had an

opportunity of observing that every one turned away from one of the women who was in our service as a bearer because she was a professional knacker. The women wear a piece of coloured stuff, usually of a dark colour, slung over the shoulders, with broad folds over the back, and fasten it with a large copper pin on the left shoulder. The few ornaments we saw were mostly made of silver.

A great deal of brandy is made here from grapes. Lodi, who discovered this, immediately declared himself ready to taste the liquor; and I must confess that we watched him with glances of suspicion when at evening we remarked his peculiar appearance and his caution in shutting the door of his tent. We knew, however, that he was born in a Buddhist country, and, having had a smattering of English civilization, did not despise spirituous liquors.

Cows and oxen are not eaten here, according to the Indian custom, but sheep and goats are.

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Lodi informed us that every time we stopped at a village to rest our grooms went begging from house to house, and that as this time they were longer absent than usual they must be busied in this way. My husband would not believe it.

'But they have their wages,' he cried incredulously. 'They sew the money into their rags,' answered Lodi, 'and never spend a halfpenny.'

My husband went into the road to find out for himself. He soon saw the interesting couple, their

SAYCE (GROOM).

heads hung innocently on one side and their hands folded in front of them. As they unfastened their rags at my husband's order all sorts of things were found in them—unripe grapes, old cords, &c. Lodi informed us that several times meat had been taken

from his saucepan, and that he frequently missed small coins. My husband at once gave each of the pair a box on the ear, threw everything in their bundles that they had collected and which did not belong to them into the river, and handed Lodi some rupees, that he might always buy their provisions for them, even against their will.

* * *

A woman appeared here from Spiti; she was no longer young, but was well-dressed. She brought us a dish of rice as a present, with the explanation that Lodi was her brother, and begged him to come away. We laughed at this request. When we were about to set forth on our way the next day she appeared again, threw herself at Lodi's feet, and besought him with tears to go with her. 'You are so like my brother!' she cried with tears. We were all moved, and her grief made it impossible to be angry with her. Lodi was much perplexed, and offered her money if she would leave him in peace. Then the lombardar also mixed himself up in the affair. 'Speak the truth; do not conceal it, if you are really the brother of the woman, for she has come a long way.'

The brother of this woman had gone away a long time ago with a European and had never come

back; some one who had seen us on the way had assured her that her brother was travelling with gentlefolks from Dankar to Simla, and therefore she had come all this way to attach herself to us.

My husband was obliged to interfere, and to answer for it that her supposed brother was born far away in Sikkim.

The woman did not quite believe this assertion, but she became calmer and followed us no farther. Lodi actually shed tears, but I believe it was with anger because he had been taken for a native, when he not only wore the dress but imagined that his features were those of a European.

* * *

After this moving scene we were not a little amused by the discovery that the yak which stood ready for my husband to ride had no tail, but seemed quite happy. My husband noticed this disfigurement in good time, and ordered the saddle to be changed. We crossed a small river and reached the forest; which, indeed, is still thin, but yet gives some shade. The village we have just left may be taken as the border line between the regions of rock and of sand.

The yaks here are stronger and have thicker coats than those which we saw in the caravans in

Northern Ladak. It has been already observed that on the high mountain paths the yak is invaluable; where a horse constantly stumbles a yak goes quietly and surely.

We notice that our yaks live in a constant state of enmity with our dogs. As soon as they approach each other the dogs try to seize the yaks by their tails or by their long tufts of hair; but the yaks attempt to keep them off, and as soon as they lose their patience they rush with lowered horns on the enemy.

* * *

At the next large village we no longer found a Buddhist temple, but a Brahmin pagoda beautifully ornamented with wood-carving.

The people, especially the men, appear to be lazy, for we could only get women to carry the luggage. As there were too few of them, we had to send our people to search for bearers. When, however, they were nowhere to be found, because they had all hidden themselves, my husband himself set out, and after a regular hunt for the men, who ran away on all sides like goats, collected the necessary number, most of them being old people, who were as usual voluntarily relieved by their sons or relatives. This plan, though it cannot

exactly be called humane, may be recommended as almost the only efficient one to the traveller in this country who is left in the lurch by his bearers.

* * *

We had been advised not to follow the direct route, but to take a longer road which was considerably better. At first we were inclined not to take this advice seriously, for at one steep place the yak which I rode sank in the loose sand, and at another very narrow place between two trees and a rock my dress caught on a bough and I was nearly thrown out of the saddle. But how great was our surprise and joy when, after a few miles, we did in fact come to a magnificent high-road which the English are making to the frontier of Thibet!

Onwards from the river Sutlej we resumed our journey without hindrance till we got to the station, and, as there was no other convenient place, halted on the road, near the tent of the engineer who was constructing it.

The following day we rested from our late efforts on the exhausting roads which lay behind us. The road now becomes level. We could now obtain every necessary, such as meal, meat, milk, fodder for the horses, &c.; and though

they are rather expensive here, yet, what is very pleasant, they can be got without bickering and quarrelling. 'Energetic measures' could now, to the advantage of both sides, be dispensed with. What a pleasure!

* * *

I can scarcely describe our joy when, at the next station but one, we entered a clean station-house whose vegetable garden offered us potatoes, turnips, cauliflowers, and lettuces. We provided ourselves with a fowl—an article of food which we had last seen at the salt-lakes—and made a broth of all these ingredients, as if to compensate ourselves for our long deprivation.

Shortly before our arrival, an English officer, Major Richards, had left the station-house, having lived here for two months with his wife and child.

According to our opinion he could not have chosen a nicer residence; for here, not far from Simla, a clean house can be had, pure air, provisions, vegetables, and everything; and, moreover, the payment is only one rupee a head a day. Certainly one is better off here than in any inn; but there can be no doubt that such a prolonged stay is against the rules and puts other travellers to great inconvenience.

Almost opposite the windows a huge mountain can be seen, with its glaciers. The roads here are so good that travelling becomes quite a pleasure, especially after the stony paths above the precipices of Ladak.

One of the natives came to me complaining of pain in the eyes and a tumour on his body. I gave him lead-water to relieve his eyes, but I knew of no remedy for his other ailment.

* * *

As we were anxious to hurry on, we left two stations behind us without a halt. At the second of the two bridges which cross the river Vangtu one finds a notice that the distance to Simla is still a hundred and twenty miles. The engineers who are constructing the road have a very pretty house here.

At the station of Nagar, where we arrived late in the evening, we found, to our astonishment, no accommodation for travellers. However, we saw between the trees several tents belonging to English officers and engineers, among whom also we recognized the hunters, our old acquaintances of the Indus and the Lake of Pengong, to whom we had lent newspapers.

They, as well as their colonel, were very friendly

and eagerly invited us to dinner; but we were obliged to refuse the invitation, because it was already late, and we wished to start early in the morning.

On the way we saw a great many monkeys, playing noisily in the trees.

We overtook the major and his family, who had been travelling in front of us, and continued our journey almost in their company; which, however, was not a convenient arrangement, as it made us both require bearers at the same time. As we ourselves required forty bearers, we frequently took only the most necessary things with us, while Lodi followed after us with the remainder and overtook us at each halt. To confess the truth, we were taking many things with us which we could have done very well without; for instance, the presents, which we had very few opportunities of distributing, filled a whole box which required a special bearer.

The competition between ourselves and the major in trying to be beforehand with each other was almost laughable. When we approached a station we found him and his family engaged on a cold breakfast, and therefore of course travelled on. Soon we heard a horseman galloping after us, and recognized our gallant major, who was overtaking us in order to prevent our getting first to

the next station. Luckily, there was room in the station-house for us all; but in his haste the major's horse had lost a shoe.

* * *

Our dog Ki, who was even less tolerant of dogs than of human beings, had nearly bitten to death the major's little dog, which had been so imprudent as to run in front of him. Ki broke his chain, and it would have been all over with Mini if my husband had not hastened to his assistance.

Our dog Sakti, who now ran loose beside us, held two things in abhorrence—water and pigs. Not only swimming across the river, but even crossing a bridge was so frightful to him, that every time, in spite of threats and blows, he ran back and scampered away as far as possible, so that it was difficult to find him again. He could not bear pigs either, and if he happened to be in the narrow street of a village at the same time as some of these harmless animals, which at the sight of the shaggy black dog naturally gave vent to a loud grunt, he would sneak off in the most disgraceful way with drooping ears and tail hanging down. The cry of 'Sakti! chriu! chriu!' had the effect of making him prick up his ears and bristle the hair on his back as he looked round uneasily.

Sakti was a very clever animal. As soon as he had once for all comprehended that his home lay far behind us he never again tried to run away from us, although he would never let us tie him up, and whenever we attempted to do so at once bit through the cord, as his former owner told us he would. He usually ran in front of us, looking round to see if I or my husband were near; if he did not see us he would sit and wait on a high rock, and as soon as we appeared dart off again in front of us. Our dog Ki, who had given him a lesson on the first day of their acquaintance, he always avoided, and feared not a little; but once, when Ki sprang at him, and, being tied up, fell on his back, Sakti bit him deeply, so that my husband had forcibly to separate them. From that day the two dogs were friends, and Sakti actually assisted his former enemy when he was engaged in a quarrel with an unequal opponent. Later on we had occasion to be surprised at Sakti's intelligence and playfulness.

* * *

In conversation with the major my husband discovered, among other things, that polyandry flourishes also in the countries we had just passed

through, though we had been told the contrary. The natives replied evasively to our questions on the subject.

* * *

During our rest at the station, as we were sitting in our room, we heard some one speaking English loudly. The Rajah of Rampoor had come to see the major; and my husband, hearing that the Rajah wished to make his acquaintance also, presently joined them. This Rajah is not rich: formerly his possessions must certainly have reached to the Thibet frontier; but at present they are much diminished, and his power is probably only nominal, for the English commissioner plays the principal part. Of course the English Government consoled the Rajah for the loss of his power with a small subsidy. He asked the major and my husband to show him their watches, weapons, and everything else of interest that they possessed. His own silver watch was a very poor one. He spoke English well, and behaved with decorum, though he reminded us of a capricious child. The Rajah commanded his secretary to write an order that all our wants should be supplied.

'Useless zeal,' said Major Richards, 'and a superfluous command.'

The Rajah was dressed all in white, and wore a little black cap with a gold border. After he had been chattering for an hour he took leave, and twenty bearers carried his palanquin away.

* * *

In spite of the Rajah's orders it was a long time before we could get any bearers, and we were obliged to send Lodi to the Rajah after all. Before he reached the palace he passed through a number of courts and entrances. The palace is poor and dirty, just as the pagoda is. According to Lodi's account, they were not particularly friendly to him there; however, some bearers appeared.

Our fellow-traveller was now behind us: we travelled on to the next station, where we procured a small sheep. But we would rather have suppressed our hunger if we could have foreseen the deep grief of the good woman who, at the command of the chief man of the village, brought out her little sheep for sale. She and her son wept so bitterly at the loss of their pet that I almost doubted whether the money they received instead of it consoled them.

We saw here several large snakes.

On the following morning we were awakened by the trumpeting and drumming which announced

the appearance of the Rajah's wife. Her palanquin was draped with rose-coloured stuff, and had a lattice at each side, and silver embroideries above it. The procession consisted of a drummer, a trumpeter, two or three women on foot, and a considerable number of servants on horseback, with drums, trumpets, and kettledrums, which

DANCING-GIRL OF CASHMERE.

made a brave noise. The more distinguished the personage the greater the noise. The servants of the Rajah wore white and yellow turbans.

The women of the upper classes always veil their faces, those of the lower orders very seldom. Their appearance is pleasing, but they soon look old on account of the hard work they

do, and the nose-ring which is the fashion here gives them a disagreeable expression.

* * *

At the city of Rampoor we were at last able to buy sugar, which we were much in need of. The bazaar here is well arranged; the wooden houses, ornamented with carving, are pretty. The house in which we were quartered looked out directly on the bazaar. There are a great number of pagodas, and another was just being built.

As we were informed that thick materials were well made here, we ordered a merchant to come and show us some. Unfortunately our cook was roasting some mutton when the merchant appeared, so that, as a good Hindoo, he could not approach within either sight or smell of the meat, and was obliged to bargain with us by means of signs at some distance off, probably so that the impure smoke might not enter his mouth when he spoke. It was a highly original scene.

Rainy weather came after the violent heat, and in some measure cooled the air. Altogether we suffered much more here from heat than we had done in the mountains.

We had just settled ourselves in a small room, the only one in the station-building behind Ram-

poor, when Major Richards appeared, unexpectedly, with his wife. As there was not room here for us all, it occurred to us to make use of the shawls which we had just got, as well as those which we had bought in Ladak and Cashmere, in order to convert the verandah of the station-house into a room, in which our fellow-travellers passed the night. On the following day we received their warm thanks for this.

* * *

The lombardar at this station had to provide us with the necessary provisions, and promised us not only mutton but also black game. We began to get desperately hungry, but nothing was yet to be seen of the promised food. Then my husband again resolved to adopt rather energetic measures. He commanded our people not to let the lombardar go till the provisions arrived. In vain the worthy *paterfamilias* declared that he wanted to go home to give the necessary orders, that he would return without fail and bring the desired provisions with him. This assurance had no effect. We were all frightfully hungry, and the poor magistrate probably no less so. When at length the evening came on, he fell into a passion with the inhabitants, and gave such strict

orders, that at last we were put in possession of the much-coveted food.

* * *

On the way we had more disagreeable occurrences. The drivers left their mules in the lurch and ran away; so that my husband was again compelled to run after them and bring them back.

The nine miles' distance from here to the station of Kashkar is really, on account of the ups and downs on the road, more like fifteen miles. At the highest point stands the house of a tea-planter, whose plantations are to be seen all round on all the mountain ridges and slopes.

At Kashkar a post has already been established, and there is a beautiful roomy bungalow. The kansaman had everything there that hungry travellers could wish for, and we emptied with great enjoyment a bottle of beer, which beverage we had last drunk in Cashmere. There are missionaries, both English and German, in the village, which possesses a church. Kashkar stands high, and therefore we found ourselves once more in a cool climate.

* * *

The next station, Narkanda, lies at a height of nine thousand feet. By the comfort of its

arrangements one sees at once that Simla, the residence of the Viceroy, is not far off.

We found here plenty of rooms, with good beds, toilette services, &c. Each room is provided with a punkah. Large parties from Simla often make expeditions to this station. Of course such good arrangements mean high prices; so that, for instance, a large sheep here costs fourteen rupees, a smaller one thirteen rupees, and a fowl one rupee, &c. Potatoes only are cheap here.

Round the houses of the natives little gardens are laid out, in which grow cactuses, banana-bushes, and laurels.

An old dealer appeared and offered to buy our ponies. My husband promised to let him have them all with the exception of my Cashmere pony, which we meant to take with us by train. The old man could not refrain from telling us how many stags, goats, and bears he had shot in his life; he seemed to exaggerate a great deal.

At the last station we fell in with a great many English people who also were on their way to Simla. My husband, therefore, rode forward to bespeak a room for us at the hotel. We heard that there were a great many people there already. One of the Englishmen who had come here, an officer, beat the village magistrate, because he had

not provided him with milk, till he was covered with blood; in this condition the magistrate went off straight to Simla to lodge a complaint. The Englishmen, especially the officers, behave in such an arrogant manner towards the natives, and handle them so roughly, that all the 'energetic measures' of my husband were mere trifles in comparison.

* * *

When my husband set off for Simla he promised to send Lodi to meet me; but Lodi had gone by a different route, and we missed each other in consequence. As I was riding through the town on my tired pony, thinking of various things, I suddenly heard the voice of a man whom my husband had sent to look for me: 'Mam-sahib, mam-sahib, Sahib ider!' (Madam, madam, here is the gentleman). He led me into a furnished apartment.

My husband had gone to visit Mr. Baring, the brother and secretary of Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy, in order to thank him for his assistance during our journey. I was compelled to laugh when my husband related to me the way in which he found out the Viceroy's house, which is not distinguished in any way from the other houses. He

had been directed in the usual way—'Go straight on, then turn to the right, then take the first turn-

OFFICIAL OF THIBET.

ing on the left,' &c. He found that he was going wrong, and also could not obtain information. Then he saw in the courtyard of a house a perfect mountain of empty champagne-bottles, and said

to himself, 'The Viceroy of India must live here'; and so, indeed, he did. Mr. Baring received him very affably, and told him that the Viceroy would like to see him. However, my husband was obliged to decline with many thanks, because we had to travel on at once.

* * *

As we were assured, there is no lack of amusement in Simla. At the street-corners we saw great advertisements and announcements of concerts, the opening of an approaching exhibition of pictures; a dog-show had just closed. In the streets we noticed people remarking our dog Sakti—'There is the dog that took the first prize. Look how long his hair is!' In the shops one can get literally anything one wants. What gives its chief attraction to Simla is, of course, the air and the climate, which is sure to be cool during the hottest months of the Indian summer. But to us Simla seemed to be a rather dirty little town, and far inferior to Darjeeling in the grandeur of its scenery.

We called on General Lumsden, the chief of the staff of the Indian army, whose acquaintance we had made on the sea-voyage out to India. As he was also himself an artist, my husband showed

him some sketches, of which he now had a large number.

* * *

From here a mail-coach goes down from the mountain to the valley. Lodi had driven on with the baggage and some of the servants. Our two grooms returned to their homes in Leh and Lasu; the only bearer from Cashmere who had made the whole journey with us set off for Ṣrinagur. The little washerman could not resist stealing, as his final act, my husband's best shirt, for which he was punished by a deduction from his wages; and, besides, the wicked fellow received no gratuity. As agreed upon, the ponies were bought by the old dealer, except my little grey horse from Cashmere, which we took with us.

* * *

At nine o'clock we left Simla in the mail-coach, and at twelve o'clock we reached Umbala in terrific heat. Here we found Lodi with the things, and on the same day we took our places in the train. Our dogs, of course, were put into an iron cage. Ki resigned himself to his fate; but Sakti, who could not stand any restraint on his liberty, resolved to fight for it. The whole way he was working at

the iron grating with his teeth, so that when he was let out one of his teeth was broken and his mouth sore and full of blood. I suppose as a clever dog he wanted to make comparisons between an iron grating of English workmanship and the hairy ropes of Ladak. The comparison could not have been favourable to the latter.

REMINISCENCES

OF THE

RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

REMINISCENCES OF THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

AFTER a stay of two years in India I returned to Europe, tanned by the sun, with a disordered liver and stomach, and suffering from intermittent fever, bringing with me a vast collection of dresses, carpets, arms, notes, and, above all, of sketches in oil. I at once set to work upon some large canvases; but the next year the Russo-Turkish war broke out, and as I had a great desire to see with my own eyes a regular European war, I threw aside the pictures I had begun and hurried to the scene of action. In order to get a near view of what was going on, I resolved to seize every opportunity that should occur of going to the front. I took part with a friend in an attack on a Turkish monitor on the Danube; I was with Generals Skobeleff and Gourko in the infantry engagements at Plevna and in the Balkans; and, lastly, I took part in the entry into Adrianople at the head of

the cavalry detachment of my friend General Strukoff.

Here the reader has my experience of the Danube—an experience for which I paid by two and a half months of illness at Bukarest.

I.

ON THE DANUBE, 1877.

My good friend General Hall introduced me to Generals Nepokoitchitski, Levitski, and others ; and also, to my great astonishment, to General Skobeleff the younger. 'I knew a Skobeleff in Turkestan,' said I. 'I am he.' 'Is it possible you have aged so much? We are old acquaintances then.' Skobeleff had, in fact, changed very much ; he had acquired a more manly appearance, and had put on the bearing of a general, and to some extent a general's way of speaking. In talking to me, however, he soon adopted the tone of a friend. He had just arrived. The two Crosses of the Order of St. George which he had won in Turkestan were the subject of many witticisms, and some one said that he must now show that he deserved them. This phrase, I remember, met with general approval and passed from mouth

to mouth, as did also the assertion that the boy Skobeleff could not be trusted with even a company of soldiers. When Skobeleff heard that I was going forward with his father, he bade me tell him that his son would soon join him. He had been appointed chief of the staff to his father, Dmitri Ivanovitch Skobeleff, who was in command of the advanced guard,—an appointment which was an intentional disgrace.

* * *

The detachment commanded by the elder Skobeleff was composed of two brigades, the first of which consisted of a regiment of Don Cossacks and a regiment of Kuban Cossacks, while the second was made up of Vladicaucasians, Ossetins, and Ingushes. The first brigade was commanded by Colonel Tutolmin, a prudent and excellent man, but excessively fond of the sound of his own voice; the second by Colonel Wulfert, who had been made Knight of the Order of St. George for his distinguished services in the storming of Tashkend. Wulfert was as silent as Tutolmin was talkative.

The following were the officers in command of the several regiments:—of the Don Cossacks, Denis Orloff, a lively sympathetic fellow and a good comrade; of the Kuban Cossacks, Kucharenko (son of the General Kucharenko who is well known

in the Caucasus), an officer who had all the look of a bold Caucasian, though, as it turned out, he was in a bad state of health ; of the Vladicaucasians, Colonel Levis—half Russian, half Swede—a stout, florid, good-humoured, and brave soldier—a typical military man, in short ; of the Ingushes and Ossetins, an officer who was Russian in appearance and in name—Pankratieff, if I remember rightly.

I generally lodged in some peasant's house with the elder Skobeleff. He possessed a two-wheeled *tarataika* (small cart) and a couple of horses. In the morning, after the troops had started, we drove after them ; when we had caught them up, Skobeleff put on his huge *papacha* (Cossack cap), mounted a horse, rode round the regiments, greeting the officers and men, and then took his seat again in the tarataika, laid the papacha under the seat, and put on once more his red convoy-cap. He had years ago commanded the imperial convoy, and still wore the convoy uniform. When we came near a village he never forgot to throw open the flaps of his overcoat so as to show his smart *tcherkesska* embroidered with broad silver lace. The Roumanians were everywhere much impressed with the general's stately and characteristic appearance. I remember well how, at a review which the commander-in-chief held at

Galatz, Skobeleff's splendid figure filled me with admiration. He was a handsome man, with great blue eyes and a full red beard, and sat his little horse as if it were a part of him.

* * *

On the way we would tell each other stories, or Skobeleff would talk with Mishka, the coachman, about the bad shoeing of the near horse, or the rottenness of the reins, or the bad state of one of the tires, &c. Generally he would wrangle, scold the coachman, and threaten to send him away, and after we had crossed the frontier he would promise him a sound thrashing 'now that the ordinary law was no longer in force.' But Mishka knew well enough that these were but idle threats. Later on, when the younger Skobeleff, Michael, had joined our party, it was often hard to say which of the two the elder Skobeleff was speaking of or which he was calling—his son Misha, or his coachman Mishka.

We ordinarily drove far ahead of the troops and chose a good place for the midday halt; here we would await them, trying meantime, if there were a house or an inn near, to procure milk, fresh or sour, and when the officers came up we would take a cold breakfast.

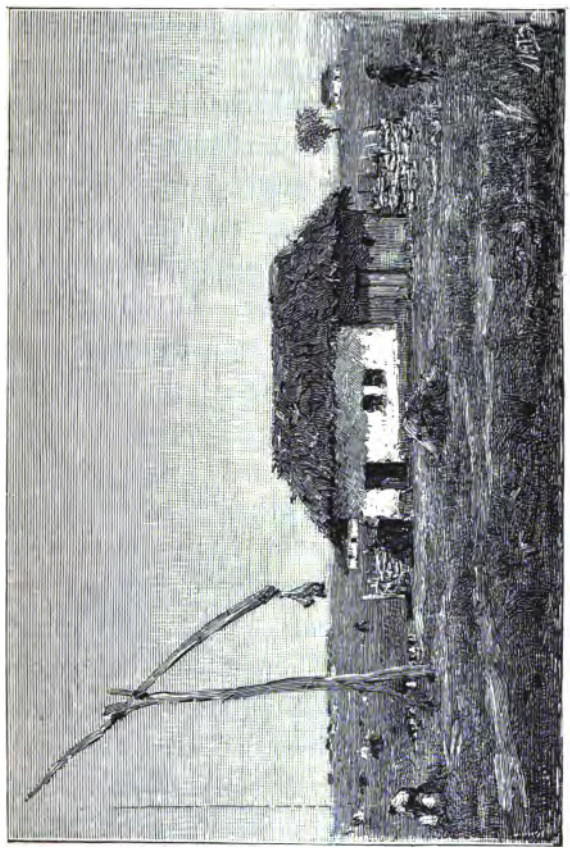
I must mention yet a few more persons who were generally of our party. These are Staff-Captain Sacharoff, who was now acting as chief of the staff to this detachment—a very clever fellow; Captain Derfelden, a cavalry officer now serving with our detachment, who, in spite of his German name, was a true Russian; and, lastly, Captain Lukasheff of the Gatshina Cuirassiers, who, if I remember right, was temporarily acting as aide-de-camp.

The detachment included, besides the troops already mentioned, a battery of Don-Cossack artillery; but their commander kept aloof from us and associated only with his own officers. The officers commanding the regiments of the second brigade, as well as Wulfert himself, were seldom with us, as they marched behind, and only appeared in Skobeleff's presence when they overtook us during our midday halt.

It is scarcely necessary to say that our breakfast parties in a meadow, under shady trees or under the projecting roof of a Roumanian cottage, were very animated and merry. When we had rested, the signal would be given to resume our march, and we would mount our tarataika once more and set off, followed by the detachment.

Often we would ask questions of the peasants,

male or female, whom we met on the road; and our efforts to make ourselves understood on these



A ROUMANIAN COTTAGE.

occasions gave us no little amusement. 'You can't manage it,' Skobeleff would say; 'let me

question him.' Sometimes he did actually succeed in getting an answer. Once we turned off the road to speak to a Roumanian who was minding a flock of sheep, and who was almost frightened out of his wits at sight of the general. Skobeleff wanted to buy a small sheep for breeding. He stretched out his hands and began to make a feeble bleating noise. The peasant understood what he wanted, sold him the sheep, and looked after us, with a smile, for a long while. We took the animal into our vehicle, but presently had to banish him to the baggage-wagons, as he was too dirty to be a pleasant travelling-companion.

* * * *

On the arrival of the detachment at the place where, according to our marching orders, we were to halt for the night, dinner was prepared in the house which the general chose for his quarters. We had agreed amongst ourselves that Skobeleff should provide the substantial viands and the cook, Tutolmin the wine, Sacharoff the tea and sugar, and I the requisite sweets—such, for instance, as almonds and raisins, nuts, &c. Skobeleff always dressed the salad himself, and, as he constantly tasted it, his beard would get covered with green leaves.

He used often to send out his cook to one of the neighbouring gardens to steal young vine-leaves to put into the soup.

When, for some reason or other, we were kept waiting for dinner, we tried to kill time with all kinds of absurdities and jokes. We composed verses to the cook on the dinner, or, according to circumstances, on the campaign, the weather, &c. I still recollect some verses which General Skobeleff, Colonel Tutolmin, Captain Sacharoff, and Captain Derfelden made up together.

My doggerel lines remained unfinished, because Dmitri Ivanovitch (the elder Skobeleff) begged me to add something on the order and discipline of the detachment, which naturally rather cooled my inspiration. My verses ran as follows:

Jests and laughter fill the air,
And songs in chorus shouted.
All's alive and merry,
  All's alive and merry.

'Tis Skobeleff with his battalions
And his Don Cossacks,
Marching 'gainst the Turks
  Marching 'gainst the Turks.

Here they tramp, the brave Kubantsee
And the ragged Ossetin
Men of mettle all,
  Men of mettle all.

Here the guns come lumbering :
In battle perhaps they'll help us.
But who can prophesy ?
  But who can prophesy ?

In the rear the hangers-on,
Surgeons, clerks, and Lord knows who,
In a motley throng,
  In a motley throng.

The proposal to continue these verses was not carried out. After dinner, until tea was brought, there was more chatting and joking, and often songs, in which the general did not disdain to join with his bass voice. Tutolmin especially was fond of singing ; he would hold on some of the notes with care, often closing his eyes with pleasure, particularly when his favourite song was sung—the soldiers' air :

Live and drive dull care away,
And be thankful to the Czar :

or—

Let us live and banish care
And swear eternal friendship.

We went to bed in good time, as we had to be up early.

* * * *

At one halting-place we had just lain down to sleep when shots were heard, and a general tumult ensued. While dressing myself I asked Skobeleff

what it could be. 'The Turks,' he thought. In a few minutes the whole detachment was on the move; unfortunately my horse's bridle had got lost, which made me later than the others in starting. In the impenetrable darkness I rode through hedges and ditches, and in consequence nearly fell from my horse. When I reached the division, already ranged in rank and file, I heard orders given in an under-tone: 'Where is the artillery? Let the artillery come here. The Kubantsee to the right.' Then the general's voice reached me: 'Vassily Vassilievitch! Where is Vassily Vassilievitch?' I quickly took my place among the staff.

A patrol was sent out, and it was found that a Jewish sutler who was taking his night's rest here, and had got thoroughly frightened in the dark, had taken it into his head to fire a few shots from his revolver in order to restore his courage. The Cossacks, especially Orloff, begged for permission to give this Jew, who had deprived the whole detachment of sleep, a sound beating; but I interposed on his behalf, and suggested that for each shot fired he should receive a cut with the *nagaika*. This was done. The Jew received three cuts only, but they were good ones.

* * *

In the large villages the Cossacks were quartered in houses, but in the intervening country in tents. On the whole the troops behaved well, though there were some complaints against them: in one place a Cossack had carried off a goose; in another a sheep had been stolen, and consumed with such skill that neither skin nor bones were to be found. Complaints were also brought, but only once, of a woman being attacked by Cossacks.

We marched on with great caution, as if in an enemy's country, with patrols, which Skobeleff called 'eyes,' on our flanks. Although some of the officers laughed at these precautions, they were probably not unnecessary; for one could not be sure that some wandering party of Tcherkesses might not cross the Danube on a dark night, do some mischief, and alarm the neighbourhood. Although we were still some distance from the Danube, the inhabitants all round us were in the greatest excitement in consequence of the constant rumours that the enemy was about to cross the river—now at this spot and now at that.

The officers, as well as the Cossacks of the detachment, led a quiet life; there was neither hard drinking nor high play. The only thing I can remember is a little entertainment given by the

colonel of the Kuban regiment, Kucharenko, who celebrated his birth-day with a feast. Colonel Orloff appeared with a half-dozen of Don champagne —the last, as he assured us ; presently another half-dozen appeared, which was said to be quite the

HE ATTACKED A WOMAN.

last; however, yet another half-dozen followed, which was really the last.

The chief interest of the feast consisted in the roast foal, of which notice had been given long

before. Although in Turkestan I had eaten horse-flesh, I had never tasted foal.

The roast was served. 'Gentlemen,' cried Kucharenko, who stammered violently, 'will you be pleased to partake of roast foal?'—the dish contained huge chops and steaks of rather bluish meat. All tried it. I liked the meat, the majority did not; some ate a little, others none at all.

Now the second dish was served. 'Gentlemen, here is mutton for those who do not care for roast foal!' The guests fell to, and were heard to exclaim: 'This is quite a different thing; this is real meat!' When all had laid down their knives and forks, Kucharenko stammered out again: 'Do not be angry, gentlemen: both were foal meat.'

* * *

I possessed neither horse nor carriage, and was therefore obliged to provide myself with both. It was settled that Sotnik W., who commanded a *sotnia* (hundred) of Kuban Cossacks, and always knew how to get everything everywhere, should procure me both. The general introduced me to him. 'All right,' said W.; and the very next day I received a chestnut horse, which, to be sure, was blind of one

eye, but good-tempered and quiet, could see well with the sound eye, and (most important of all) cost only seventy roubles—not a high price under the circumstances.

Later on, at Bukarest, W. also got me a horse and carriage from a Russian settler, a Skopets, for 400 francs. For my carriage Skobeleff gave me a Cossack foot-soldier from the Don, called Ivan, and for my horses a young Ossetin called Kaitoff.

* * *

Shortly after this the younger Skobeleff arrived. His horses had preceded him. One, which his father had given him, was an English thoroughbred, for which 2,000 francs had been paid; the second, a white stallion of Persian race, had, I suppose, some good qualities, but in most respects was not well formed; the third, a yellow chestnut of Turcoman blood from Khiva, did not seem to be one of the best horses of that country.

The young general had been already talked of in the division, and I, being acquainted with him, was often asked about him. I told everybody that he was a brave and excellent officer.

The relation between the elder Skobeleff and his son was a friendly one; but it seemed to me, nevertheless, that Dmitri Ivanovitch did not quite

like the Cross of St. George of the third class which his son had, because he himself had only the fourth. Moreover, the father spoke sarcastically of his son Michael's military service in Turkestan (partly, no doubt, because he was himself an old Caucasian), and laughed at the engagements there as child's-play. Once, at table, I was obliged to stand up warmly for the young general, and the old man was quite annoyed. Altogether, it must be confessed that young Skobeleff to a certain extent disturbed the orderly patriarchal conditions of our camp life by his martial stories and his plans and proposals for the coming campaign.

He had at that time a number of plans ready, not only for taking the whole army and its several divisions across the Danube, but also for surprising the Turkish pickets, batteries, &c. He communicated his plans in confidence first to one and then to another of the older officers of the detachment, to the great astonishment of many. 'He is mad,' said S. to me; 'a fresh plan every hour. He takes one by the arm, with "I say, do you know"—and begins to talk sheer nonsense.'

As I was sincerely attached to Skobeleff, I advised him to be more reserved and cautious. He asked with much interest what impression he had made on the detachment. I replied that his

youth and figure, his Cross of St. George, and other points had undoubtedly made a certain impression; but that he must take care not to efface it by his schemes, which, however practical and easy of execution they might appear to him personally, bored everybody else. Skobeleff thanked me warmly, saying, 'That is the advice of a true friend.'

* * *

We came within a short distance of Bukarest, but did not enter the town, on account of the convention which had been made.

Our former agent in Constantinople, Colonel Bobrikoff, accompanied by several Roumanian officers, rode out from the town to meet us; they led us round through the suburbs, and in one of these, by the Danube, we took up our quarters. This proceeding caused great discontent in the detachment; the condition that we should not march through the town was called humiliating, but altogether unjustly.

When the troops had been billeted, the elder Skobeleff was informed that the commander-in-chief was stopping at Bukarest on his way and was lodging in the house of Consul Stuart. The worthy Dmitri Ivanovitch was highly delighted, and as he

sat on the bed threw up his legs straight into the air. Presently he rode off, displaying the flag, of blue silk with a large white cross, which was carried before the detachment on the march through Roumania.

Accompanied by young Skobeleff, I drove through the town. I must confess that I was ashamed of my companion, for he put out his tongue at the ladies we met, particularly at the pretty ones.

Skobeleff felt his inaction painfully. It was evident that a separate command was not to be entrusted to him, and he deeply regretted having left Turkestan, where, it was rumoured, a demonstration against England was preparing. The thought of a campaign in India gave him no peace. 'We were both fools to come here,' he said to Captain Masloff, who had come with him from Turkestan, and, like him, was longing to be back. I advised Michael Dmitrievitch to have a little patience, whereupon he replied: 'Let us wait, Vassily Vassilievitch. I understand waiting, and shall be sure to take what comes to me.' Masloff I advised to join fortunes with Skobeleff, who, it was certain, would find his right place. It is a pity that he succeeded in doing so too late, that his youth was so long a stumbling-block, and that this fiery spirit

was not allowed free scope. The result of the campaign would then have been very different.

The elder Skobeleff gave us a dinner in the Huk Hotel, where I also had taken rooms. The inn was good and not expensive, and drove a roaring trade, it was said. But, indeed, there was scarcely a person in Bukarest who did not, somehow or other, get profit from us Russians. The owners of inns and hotels must really have made their fortunes.

* * *

As I had to provide the sweets for our common table, I ransacked all the shops in the town, but could find nothing except some inferior raisins and hard dried plums; everything else was sold out. It was much to my annoyance that I had to offer my good comrades these rather untempting articles.

After two days' rest we marched on in our old order. One day the DonCossacks led the van, the next day the Kubantsee, for the most part singing and playing Cossack music, which, if not always harmonious, sounded at any rate loud and bold. I remember one officer in particular who conducted the music in the Kuban regiment—a fine, well-built, handsome man. As he conducted he beat a

Turkish drum ; and how he did beat it ! One could only listen to it at a respectful distance. The troops were disposed of as before—partly in cottages, if there was room ; if not, in tents as near as possible to the water. For ourselves, we always found some house—now a peasant's, now a landowner's. I sometimes went with Dmitri Ivanovitch to the farms by the way, where, if the owner was absent, they willingly showed us everything, and offered us *dultchas*—i.e. fruit-syrup—with the usual glass of water. Once we lodged in a large, very roomy house belonging to a landowner. But that night our detachment did not fare well ; though they searched carefully, no dry place could be found, and the Cossacks were obliged to pitch their tents on swampy ground ; moreover, the weather was damp, and cold rain fell the whole time. I remember that our commanding officer was then accused of making his troops encamp too near his own quarters.

While there, the elder Skobeleff received orders to appear at headquarters, and, evidently uneasy, he set off. The fact was, that during our stay in Bukarest the Ingushes belonging to our detachment had had a fight—such, at least, was the story —and officious people thereupon reported in influential quarters that the Mussulmans among the

Ingushes, and some of those among the Ossetins, had expressed their dislike of the campaign; nay, these busybodies actually pretended that they had seen the so-called malcontents throw away their cartridges, saying that they would not fire on their fellow-believers the Turks.

All this proved later to be mere nonsense, but gossip did not fail to spread the report that there was a want of discipline in the detachment, and even went so far as to hint that it was almost in a state of mutiny. The commander-in-chief, disquieted by these rumours, summoned Skobeleff, on whose advice it was decided to send back the Ingushes and the Ossetins to Russia. A harsher and, under the circumstances, a more unjust measure could scarcely be imagined; and these rough soldiers shed tears as they tried to move their commanders from their purpose and to establish their own innocence; but all in vain, for their return to Russia was definitely decided upon. They were obliged to start on their way home to Odessa.

During Skobeleff's absence his son took his place. How pleased he was to be able to ride along the ranks of the Cossacks and call out to them, 'Good-day, children!' Even at that time, when I dissuaded him from attempting to get leave

to return to Turkestan, he said to me sadly, 'Do you think, Vassily Vassilievitch, that I do not find it hard to be unable to greet the men, when I have led regiments into battle, and had command in a province?'

The Cossacks recognized the difference between father and son; you might hear them say, 'We could do with a commander like that.' When the elder Skobeleff learnt this, later, he was annoyed. 'He cannot have this post,' he said to me, 'because I have it.' The old man was called Pasha—I do not know why; Sacharoff called him Rygun Pasha, because he often hemmed loudly to clear his throat. The Cossacks frequently sang a parody of the well-known soldiers' song, 'There was a battle at Poltava,' which began with the words 'At Junis was a battle fought,' in allusion to the Russian volunteers in the war between Turkey and Servia. Among the rest the following lines—

Our mighty emperor—
God keep his memory—

were parodied as follows:—

Our mighty M . . .—
May the devil take him—
Only in the rear was seen,
Writing telegrams.

The elder Skobeleff heard this song often without taking any notice of it; but the younger, on the very first day of his short command, said to the men, 'I beg of you, children, not to sing that song, because it ridicules our brothers who fought bravely for the cause of the Slav.'

He made inquiries about the men's food and about various other matters concerning the detachment: and this, becoming speedily known to the privates, procured him great popularity.

In everything that related to the health of the troops the elder Skobeleff trusted completely to the integrity of the brigadier-generals, who in turn relied on the colonels of the regiments; and the result was that in reality there was no control whatever. An active young doctor reported that the regiment stationed at K. was insufficiently provided with medical appliances, and that in addition the food was bad. The officer in command of the division acted in an extremely patriarchal fashion, for he questioned the colonel of the regiment, and in consequence removed the doctor from his post, ascribing his damaging statement to his personal dislike of his colonel.

'What a mean fellow that doctor is!' said the colonel to me. 'When he came into the regiment, he had nothing; I gave him a Cossack, I gave him

a horse, and one thing and another; and now just see how he repays me.'

* * *

We soon reached Frateshti, near the railway-station of the same name, whence there is a view of the Danube glittering like a silver band in the sunshine. As the detachment was to take up a position along the bank of the river, and there was as yet no talk of crossing, I thought I would seize the opportunity of going to Paris for a short time. Some of my painting-materials had suffered severely on the way, so that it was necessary either to send for new ones or to go myself. I preferred the latter, told Skobeleff of my intention, and set off the same day, *viâ* Bukarest, for Ploieshti, which was then our headquarters.

* * *

Twenty days later I was back again. There was a great deal going on at headquarters then, because the Emperor was with the army. In the evening of the same day I went to Giurgevo, where Skobeleff was stationed with his division. The next morning the thunder of cannon awoke me, and a Cossack brought me the following message by order

of the commanding officer: 'The Turks are bombarding Giurgevo. Come and look.'

I rode down to the bank of the Danube. The day was fine and bright, and Rustchuk, with its forts, its white minarets, and the distant camp, lay before me as if in the palm of my hand. The elder Skobeleff with his staff sat under the projecting roof of a house which overhung the river. The Turks, as it turned out, were bombarding, not the town, but the trading-vessels which lay between the shore and a little island, and which they thought were intended to take our troops across. They were strangely built barks, reminding one of the last century; and any one who believed that the Russian troops proposed to make their way to the Turkish shore in these galleys must have had a very poor opinion of our means of crossing the Danube.

Several shells had already fallen among the houses on the extreme edge of the town, and the confusion which followed was a sight to see: the inhabitants snatching up the most indispensable of their belongings and flying to the other side of the town. I went on board the vessels, and took my station on the middle one in order to observe on the one side the hurly-burly in the houses, and on the other the falling of the bombs into the

water. Just at that moment a shell fell into a long Government building, which was probably some kind of magazine, but at that time served as quarters for half a sotnia of Kuban Cossacks; a second followed immediately. When the first shell struck the wall, the Cossacks began to collect their things; but when the second broke through the roof, they crept out like cockroaches, hanging their heads, and, with dagger in one hand and cap in the other, ran quickly into the streets, hugging the walls as they went.

Some of the shells, plunging into the sandy shore and there bursting, threw up the sand as if by magic in the shape of a bouquet or a cauliflower head, from the centre of which solid clods and stones flew into the air, while above it rose a thick column of white smoke.

The shells fell near the spot where I was; a few only reached the shore—most of them fell on the ships, or into the water between or in front of them. Twice the bark on which I stood was struck. The first shot struck the bows; the second pierced the hull and turned everything between-decks upside down. The explosion was so violent that I cannot call it anything but hellish, though my knowledge of hell does not rest on personal experience. The crash, I remember, drove

two puppies on deck, where they began to play; the explosion merely startled them and made them prick up their ears, and then they set at each other again.

It was most interesting to see how the bombs fell into the water and made fountains rise high into the air. When the first smoke rose I felt rather queer, and thought, 'Now the place where you are standing will be struck; you will be thrown down and hurled into the water, and no one will know what has become of you.'

The Turks threw fifty shells and then became silent. The result of this bombardment was very trifling.

'And where were you?' I was asked; 'how could you miss such an interesting performance, done gratis too?' 'Oh, I saw it better than you, for I was on that ship the whole time.' 'Impossible!' they all cried with one accord. 'Let us go and see what havoc they have made,' said Skobeleff. We went on board all the vessels, saw what damage had been done, but could not find the dogs. Had they got frightened and crept away to hide themselves, or had they been hurled into the water?

I did not get many compliments for having made my observations from the ship. Some simply

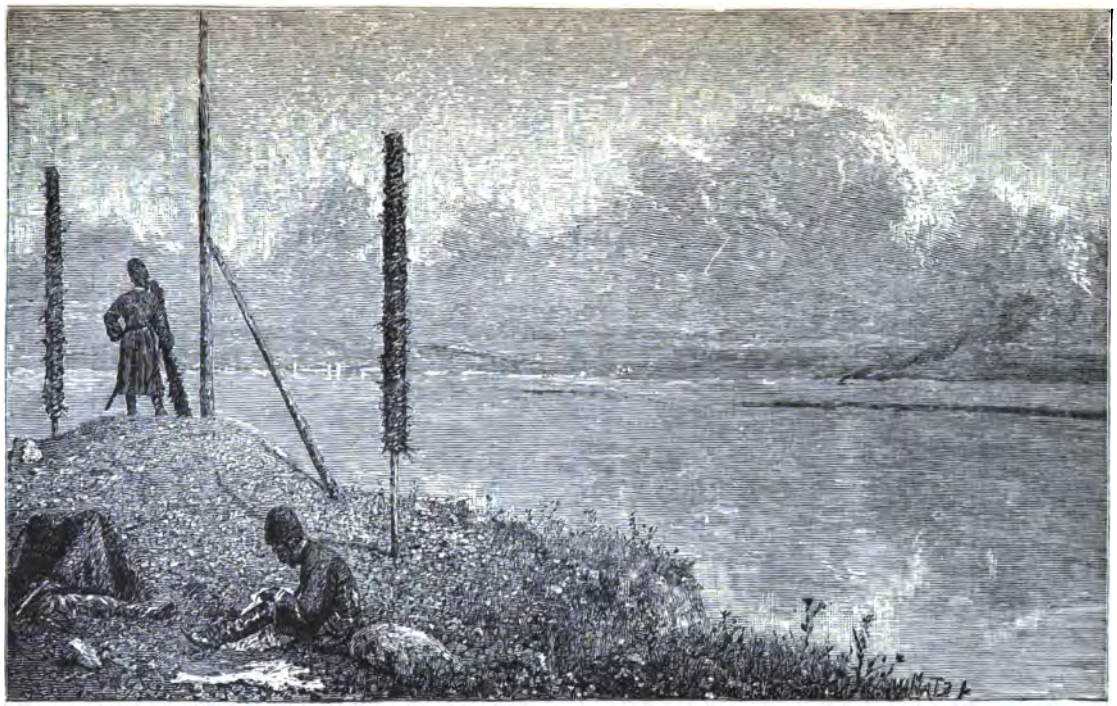
refused to believe that I had placed myself in the middle of the target; others called it useless bravado; it did not occur to any one that these very observations were the object of my stay. If I had had a paint-box with me, I should have painted some explosions.

* * *

The detachment placed pickets along the Danube to a great distance. On the left flank, in Malorosh, were stationed Orloff's Don-Cossacks; in the centre, stretching as far as the village of Mali-Dijos, the Kuban Cossacks; and beyond them, reaching to the village of Petroshain, the Ossetins. I first rode to the Don-Cossacks at Malorosh, who had built themselves a model watch-tower. The Turks, enraged at this, fired upon the Cossacks, which Orloff did not like at all. The shells, falling among the horses, terrified them and drove them away, so that it was difficult to find them again. The Cossacks made an attempt to reply with their little field-guns, but soon had to give it up in order not to disgrace themselves.

* * *

Batteries were being erected close by Giurgevo, and I went with the two Skobeleffs to look at the



PICKET ON THE DANUBE.

works. The elder Skobeleff observed to the engineer officer that he was making the boarding of the platform much too thin. The rather dandified young officer who was doing the honours replied; 'It is thick enough for the Turks, your Excellency.' A little further from the town, at the first village, Slobodsei, another battery was being erected, of siege-guns, apparently, which were to carry nine versts. There the energetic Colonel Pliutchinski was at work.

* * *

The little town of Giurgevo had undergone no change, except that here and there greater activity than usual prevailed. Many of the inhabitants certainly had been frightened away by the bombardment; the houses on the shore in particular stood empty; but within the town, in the squares and streets, there were great throngs of people, and trade was brisk. The hotels and inns were filled with officers carousing—some alone and some in groups, some with women and some without them; and their merriment was not always restrained within the limits of propriety. One evening, when I entered an inn with S. and other officers to have supper, we found a drunken company there, who had taken off sabres and caps, some even their

tunics, and had put them on the girls who were drinking with them. And all this took place in the public room !

The younger officers of our detachment—the above-mentioned S., L., and others—frequented a certain garden, to which they were attracted by the charms of the damsels who sang and played the harp there, and made Skobeleff so eager by their account of the pleasures of the entertainment, that the old man, who feared to compromise himself by visiting the garden, decided to take a peep secretly. He was once seen to steal along by the garden and look through a hole in the fence, which exploit brought upon him well-merited raillery.

* * *

At Bukarest, through M. D. Skobeleff, I had become acquainted with MacGahan, the well-known correspondent of the 'Daily News'; later, at Giurgevo, I met Mr. Forbes, when he came with some communication to the staff of the detachment. I was the only one there who could speak English, and therefore acted as interpreter, endeavouring at the same time to soften the excessive coldness with which he was received and his questions answered. In order to escape reproaches for my indulgence to the 'deceitful English,' I avoided

entering into conversation with Mr. Forbes in our casual meetings. I must confess that I did not find it easy, as one could see that he felt the general mistrust entertained towards him as an Englishman, and exerted himself to be pleasant.

* * *

The officer in command of the division lived in a little house on the river-bank, where we met every day at dinner. Here we were joined by Prince Tserteleff, formerly secretary to the ambassador at Constantinople, who had entered the Kuban regiment as a subaltern (uriadnik), and was now serving in Skobeleff's detachment. The younger Skobeleff, who was chief of the staff of the detachment, rarely associated with us; but he passed most of his time at Bukarest, whither he was chiefly attracted by the women of all nationalities who gathered there from every part of Europe. The feasting and carousing in that town were a sight to see. From the ensign who for the first time had three hundred roubles in his pocket to the high official who threw away his thousands, all showed their Slav nature; all rioted, and ate and drank, but especially drank. Michael Skobeleff at this time had not a farthing in his pocket; so that he was ready to take anything he could get;

from his father especially, who was not exactly generous, he tried to squeeze money. Once, when Skobeleff asked his father for money, the latter sent him four gold pieces. The son was beside himself. 'Why, I give every lackey a larger present than that!' he cried indignantly. During that gay time, in fact, the largest sum would scarcely have been enough for him.

* * *

I used often to walk with the elder Skobeleff in the avenues on the boulevards. 'Let us see how a spy is disposed of,' he said one day. We sat down on a bench opposite a house into which Colonel Parentsoff and the aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief had gone. In front of the steps stood soldiers, two to the left and two to the right. We sat some time, and I should have gone in to be present at the trial if Skobeleff had not held me back.

But out they came at last on to the steps, the spy in front, his hands in the pocket of his jacket, as if the matter did not concern him, because he felt he was innocent. But when he saw the soldiers he seemed to realize that the affair was serious; he stood still a few seconds, and then went down the steps.

It was a certain Baron K.; I do not know

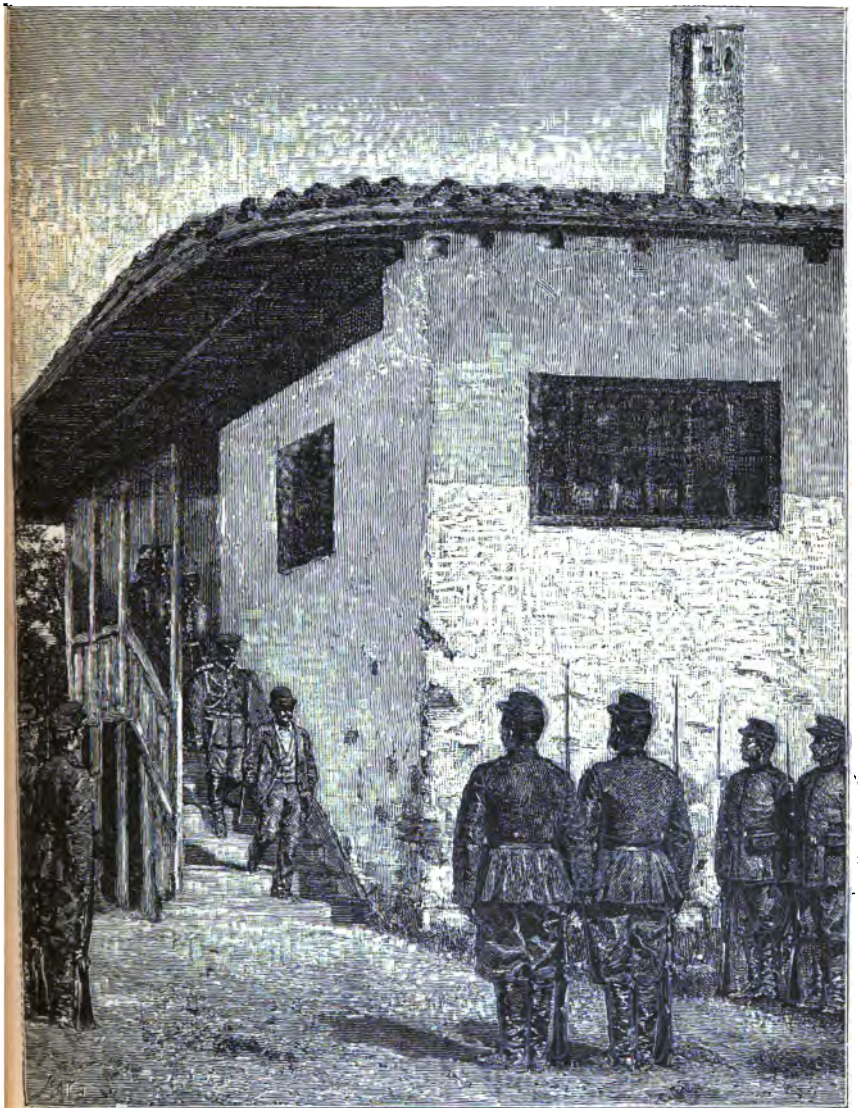
whether he was really a spy; but probably compromising papers were found on him, for he was sent to Siberia. After two months, however, he was allowed to return.

* * *

Before my departure for Paris I had met at headquarters Lieutenant Skrydloff of the naval guard. He was then going on a reconnoitring expedition on the Danube, and invited me to Mali-Dijos, where the Danube division of the naval guard was stationed. He told me that he intended to attack a Turkish ironclad with his torpedo-boat, and wanted me to go with him. I was quite willing, but made him give me his word of honour that I should see an explosion. I could not afford to miss so rare an opportunity.

Soon after my return to Giurgevo I paid a visit to the naval officers, who lived in a village some distance from the river-bank, because the dynamite and pyroxiline with which the torpedos are charged had to be protected as far as possible from the Turkish fire.

Skrydloff and I had been comrades long ago as naval cadets, though he was my junior by two years; and we had been through a campaign together on the frigate 'Svetlana.' When I was



THE SPY.

sergeant in the naval cadet corps he was under me, and more than once I had had to reprimand him severely, particularly for constantly talking and whispering at the front.

I quartered myself on him and his comrade Podiapolski in their little house, which was situated in a large, dirty square. Sometimes we dined at the officers' mess, but more often cooked ourselves something at home, on which occasions the *denchtchik* (officer's servant), a good fellow, gave us a helping hand. We slept on the staircase under curtains, because the gnats (it was then the end of May) were very troublesome.

On the very first day I was initiated into the great secret of the two chums. When the naval guard left St. Petersburg, the head of the well-known English firm which contracted for them presented the division with a case of sherry to take with them, which Skrydloff undertook to convey to the Danube. So far he kept his word ; but no one besides Podiapolski knew anything about this case, and so the friends partook of the sherry, which was very good, and entertained guests with it occasionally, until at last the truth became known, and the case, now somewhat lighter, was carried off to the mess-room.

The commander of the whole torpedo squadron,

Post-Captain Novikoff, was living in the same square —a very brave officer, who had been decorated for his services at Sebastopol with the small Cross of St. George. When I met him for the first time, at the table of the commander-in-chief, our host asked him what he had received the cross for. 'I blew up a powder-magazine,' replied N., in such a deep bass that everybody was startled. The same bass voice, though somewhat subdued, was heard in the cottage in which he lived. When we had tea with him, we tried to gather from his talk, and from the arrangements he was making, whether the laying of torpedos would soon begin. The object of this operation (which had been long expected) was to protect the passage of the Danube, which was to take place immediately after.

Novikoff was indefatigable. Brave and cool-headed, he had only two noticeable faults—first, he deafened everybody with his bass voice, and secondly, he would speak of the torpedos as bombs. Nevertheless he received a ready pardon for both these offences, on account of his kind and simple ways.

* * *

I went frequently with Skrydloff when he had instructions to carry out. We went about the river (by night, of course), and put buoys to mark the way which the torpedo-boats were to take in laying the torpedos. The Danube was still much swollen, and some torpedo-boats of rather deep draught could not pass everywhere along the low flooded bank. The channel of a little river flowing into the Danube had to be sounded and marked with buoys; torpedoes were to be laid there also.

As express orders had been given not to alarm the Turks and arouse their attention, but rather to lull them into security as far as possible, we did not set to work until after nightfall. By the morning the buoys were fixed; but the clearing of the channel, which was barred at the mouth with solid posts, gave us a great deal to do, and we could not get the work done in the time. When we had made a little provisional passage for the sloop, we rowed into the Danube, partly to show our courage, partly to ascertain whether there were Turks at the sentry box on the island. Using the oars very softly, scarcely dipping them into the water, we passed along a dense bed of willows. Every sudden noise—the splashing of a fish, the call of a night-bird—made us shudder. We landed at the little island, walked round, and convinced ourselves

that the Turks had evacuated it, although they had been seen mowing grass shortly before. We had come down with the stream; the Turkish bank was quite close. The current was so strong that it was difficult to make way against it. In order not to tire our men and rouse the attention of the Turks, we soon turned back. By morning we were at home. Skrydloff's assistant, Midshipman Niloff, who had made the night trip with us, cleared out the little river completely the following night.

Another time we went on a secret mission to all the troops posted on the Danube. We rowed on past the Kuban Cossacks, the Vladicaucasians, and the Ossetins to Simnitza, where some hussars—I forget which—had placed outposts.

At Parapan I became acquainted with General Dragomiroff, who was entrusted with preparations for the passage of the river. When he was assured that I was not a correspondent, he spoke so freely, rationally, and logically about the course of affairs, that we—i.e. I, Skrydloff, and Wulfert, with whom we were staying—were quite astonished. Dragomiroff enjoyed then, and still enjoys, great popularity, and since Skobeleff's death he remains one of the best generals of our army, if not the very best.

The officers with whom we dined were extremely pleasant; they fed us well and provided

us promptly with the necessary horses. Skrydloff, however, would have been better pleased if a little care in the choice had been added to the promptitude; for such Rosinantes fell to his lot, almost it seemed intentionally, that on the ride from the hussars to the Cossacks he had to whip his tall brown horse constantly, and (what was more unpleasant still) in spite of his efforts to ride in the English fashion, namely, rising in the stirrups, he grazed himself severely.

* * *

I made a sketch of the Danube and a Cossack picket on the bank, but on the whole painted very little. I rode to Giurgevo, went to the Cossacks, looked on at the sappers' works, or went with Skrydloff to try some machinery on his torpedo-boat 'Shutka.' In order not to attract the attention of the Turks, we were obliged to go after sunset or in bad weather, and the funnel could not be allowed to smoke nor to throw out sparks, so that we had to use only the best steam coal. The Turks did not know, and were not to know, that we had a whole fleet of small steamers.

We once started at a rather late hour in very stormy weather. The wind became so strong that the 'Shutka' could hardly make her way back.

The muddy Danube was roaring terribly; heavy rain wrapped everything in thick darkness. This suggested to Skrydloff the idea of carrying out a long-intended attack on one of the Turkish ironclads which were lying before Rustchuk. We knew that one ironclad was lying in front of the forts, another more to the right behind the little island. As, from the hammering which had been going on for the last few days, it was to be supposed that they had been furnishing the latter with a crinoline or some similar means of protection, we could only count on getting near the first ironclad. In such weather it was possible to get close to the ironclad almost unnoticed. 'Shall we try it?' asked Skrydloff. 'I am ready.' But we did not go after all. Skrydloff said finally, 'It is not a question of destroying a superfluous Turkish ironclad, but of laying torpedos and making the passage of the river possible for our army. With such an important object in view, it would be imprudent, nay, even wrong, to risk one of our best torpedo-boats, of which, as it is, the number is not very large. What do you think?' 'I dare say you are right,' I replied.

We decided to land, but, in consequence of the bad weather, mistook our direction, put in at the wrong place, a very long way from our village, and did not reach home till night. On the promontory

where we landed there was a picket of three Cossacks; and these fellows, wrapped in their *burkars* (Caucasian for 'cloaks'), were so sound asleep that we had to wake them by force. If a party of Tcherkesses had come, they would have been slaughtered like sheep. I did not conceal the occurrence from the commander of the sotnia, but first exacted a promise that the Cossacks should go unpunished this time.

* * *

The commander of the sotnia stationed at Mali-Dijos was K. P. V., the same omniscient and ubiquitous officer who at Skobeleff's request had bought me my horse and carriage. I became rather intimate with this peculiar person, and often visited him. His first question when I came was whether I did not want some *borshtch* (beetroot-soup). 'Well, then, tea at any rate,' he would call out, and without waiting for my answer order it to be got ready. From what plantations he got his tea I do not know, but remember very well that it only just coloured the water, and that K. P. considered it good. There were no teaspoons, although the host told his denchtchik every time to bring teaspoons. The latter would then go to the hedge and cut a switch neatly with his dagger.

K. P. drank tea in economical fashion, taking the sugar into his mouth; if he did not use a piece quite up he threw back the rest of it into the sugar-basin. His conversation with me, as probably with every other person, began with the stereotyped question, 'Well, do they say we are going to cross soon?' Then he passed on to the rumours of peace, which, arising from unknown sources, flew about even before the war operations began, and he never forgot to inquire, more or less confidentially, how money could be sent home in the best, safest, and most advantageous manner, and whether gold could be sent.

Kusma Petrovitch was evidently very fond of his home, and the more the campaign was protracted, the more frequent and obstinate were the rumours which reached him, through unknown channels, of the speedy conclusion of peace. He talked a great deal of his farm near Stavropol, of his eldest son Kusmitch and his precocious intelligence and early development. He also described the hare and fox-hunting when the first snow fell, for which he had purchased his sporting dog Milka. Every time I visited him, he offered me the dog as a present. He would also talk about the battles with the mountaineers on the Kuban, without representing himself as a hero; on

the contrary, he confessed quite openly that he saved his life by running away in such and such an engagement, which act the Cossacks do not consider dishonourable, as they hold that as long as one is superior to the enemy one must kill and defeat him, but that in the opposite case one must save oneself, and the quicker the better.

Kusma Petrovitch also came out as a musician. I went to his quarters once by invitation, along with Skrydloff and two other naval officers, and found him dressed in a fur *beshmet* (jacket), with a violin in his hand, conducting a chorus of singers. I am bound to admit that the hand which guided the bow was more bold than practised ; but, as the saying goes, you can't expect a man to do more than his best. His speech was always calm and tranquil, and so were his eyes, which sometimes had an absent look. He had a very calm manner, too, in dealing with his men, and never abused them except in extreme cases.

He almost worshipped his horse—a little black animal from Kabarda—and fed and coddled it so that it got quite round like a juicy apple ; but for riding he used another horse. 'A horse like that,' he used to say of his favourite, 'is no longer to be found even in Kabarda!' and he would then declare that he would not sell it at any price.

This did not, however, prevent his selling it to me later for three hundred roubles, although it was scarcely worth more than a hundred or a hundred and fifty. In a word, one found in him a typical Cossack, who had risen from the ranks, who was no coward, though not particularly brave (both bravery and cowardice being equally rare among the Cossacks); a man without any cultivation whatever, but with the capacity of making himself at home in any position, of finding provisions and forage where they seemed absolutely not to exist, of pursuing the enemy boldly, when he retreated, and, when he attacked, of retreating before him without loss of honour.

* * *

Skrydloff told me, in confidence, that he had seen at Novikoff's house a paper from head-quarters which expressed the dissatisfaction of the commander-in-chief at the backward state of the preparations, whereby the laying of the pontoons (which were quite ready) and the passage of the whole army were delayed. This, of course, meant that the passage would take place during the next few days, although coals and other things were still wanting. He also told me that he and Ch. had been appointed to attack the enemy's iron-

clads, in case the latter should attempt to interfere with our operations. He had learnt further that Novikoff did not wish any one to accompany the expedition who did not belong to the division, so that if I wanted to go I ought to speak to the captain in good time.

At first Modest Petrovitch seemed inexorable, and answered by repeatedly advising me to look on from the bank—it was only about three versts; but at last he gave in, and we began our preparations for the campaign against the Turks. We cooked several chickens, took a bottle of sherry (the case of which everybody knew had already been taken away), and provided ourselves with bread and other supplies for nearly a week; and besides drawing-paper I took my little paint-box, which, however, was not destined to be used.

* * *

The evening before our expedition I received through Skobeleff the following telegram from headquarters; 'The artist Verestchagin is to join the rifle brigade immediately.—SKALON.' At first I was puzzled, but when I got to Giurgevo I understood how it was. Some time before I had begged Skalon, the commander-in-chief's secretary, to give me an opportunity of witnessing the passage of the river,

and to attach me temporarily for this purpose to the most advanced troops. The rifle brigade had now moved out of Simnitza, so that the passage was to be made somewhere in that direction. As the troops marched only at night (remaining quiet during the day in order not to arouse the Turks), not less than forty-eight hours would be required for the march; I therefore hoped to arrive with the blue-jackets in good time for the laying of the torpedoes, and then to overtake General Tsvetsinski with his brigade.

I went into the little house where my things were, in order to select what was absolutely necessary. While thus engaged I did not feel quite comfortable; I reflected that the Turks would not watch Skrydloff blowing them up quite so quietly as I intended to watch the explosion, and that our torpedoes in all probability would hurl us into the air first. I gave up my lodgings, saw to my horses (among them a new white ambling nag, which cost five-and-twenty gold pieces), called on a few officers, and then went that very night to Mali-Dijos.

My younger brother, who had joined the service again in the Vladicaucasian regiment, arrived that day and came to me. I took him to his superior officers, and then went, with my knapsack, to the blue-jackets.

After dinner the senior officer of the naval detachment gave out brandy to the crews in the courtyard of the house where the mess was held, and did it so solemnly and methodically that our departure was considerably delayed. It was already nearly dark when we assembled on the shore of the little bay where the torpedo-boats lay, just getting up their steam.

Quite unexpectedly, young Skobeleff appeared, took Novikoff aside, and began to talk to him with great eagerness. He expressed his wish to be useful to the detachment, and proposed that he should accompany the expedition; but Novikoff gave him a decided refusal.

The chaplain of the Minsk regiment, a very advanced young man, offered a prayer for the journey. As I knelt I looked with curiosity at the interesting scene before me. On the right, the setting sun was sending out his last rays, and the smoking torpedo-boats stood out like dark shadows against the crimson sky and water; on the bank were the sailors in a semicircle, the officers in their midst, all on their knees, all praying fervently. All around was silence: the voice of the praying chaplain alone was audible.

I could not at the time make any sketch of the torpedo-boats, which has prevented me from re-

producing on canvas this scene, which impressed itself deeply on my memory.

When the prayer was over, those who were

SAILOR.

going embraced those who remained behind. Among the latter was Podiapolski, our friend and chum. When, on leaving, I embraced Skobeleff, he

whispered, 'Happy fellow, to be able to go with them! How I envy you!'

* * *

Skrydloff did not hasten to get up steam, and we had to make use of the oars. When I reproached him for this, he said reassuringly: 'You may be certain that we shall overtake everybody, and reach the Danube sooner than the others, who do not know the channel and will get aground.' And so it was. The darkness was so great that the buoys were not visible, and could not be seen even by the pilot on the first sloop. As soon as our engines began to work and we moved quickly we saw to right and left dark motionless masses. We hailed them, and they answered us; they were torpedo-boats which were aground. Our 'Shutka' set several of them afloat; but they must have run ashore again later, for the progress made was slow.

According to our plan we were to reach the Danube before dawn and at once lay torpedoes; but it fell out differently: daylight came and no boat had yet reached the channel. We found the spot where we had fixed the posts. Just as Skrydloff had foretold, we were nearly the first in the channel of the Danube: no one was before us except Ch. with the second torpedo-boat, which, as

it excelled the others in lightness and speed, was the one fixed upon to carry out the attack. In speed our 'Shutka' took the second place.

We stayed for a long time in one place in order that the others might come up with us, and then steamed along a little island, the thick trees of which concealed us from the sight of the Turks. To approach secretly and lay a torpedo by the Turkish bank, as had been planned, was evidently out of the question; besides, all the torpedo-boats, except ours and perhaps two others, smoked and snorted terribly, so that our squadron would have been betrayed by that alone.

We had scarcely come out from behind the first island when smoke rose near the sentry-box on the opposite bank. A shot fell; then a second, a third, and more and more the farther we went. The bank was not far off, and we could see clearly the soldiers running hither and thither in confusion. Fresh riflemen soon came up, especially Tcherkesses, who rained upon us a regular shower of bullets.

Novikoff overtook us. He stood at the helm, resting his elbows on the iron roof of the torpedo-boat, and paying no attention to the bullets, for which his stout figure, wrapped in a mantle, presented a good mark.

The quantity of shot that fell made it rather hot for us; the bank was literally covered with riflemen, whose bullets made a noise like the continuous rolling of drums. The torpedo-boats moved on heavily and silently; the first had already begun their work by the bank when the last were just entering the river. The sun had long since risen; it was a bright summer morning, with a gentle breeze ruffling the water. Under a persistent fire the torpedoes had been laid; but the blue-jackets committed the great mistake of not going at once straight to the right or Turkish bank, but beginning from the left bank. The first torpedoes were laid quite correctly; towards the middle, too, Midshipman Niloff laid his torpedoes, but, being hurried, he did not lay them quite properly, and so they came to the surface again. Further than this, none of the officers ventured to go, and half of the channel therefore remained passable. This mistake was rectified by Podiapolski in the night. Nevertheless the Turks might easily have broken through, and the fact that they did not attempt to do so can only be attributed to the fear with which they had been inspired by the previous blowing up of their vessels by Russian torpedoes.

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Our two torpedo-boats in the meantime kept concealed behind the bushes of a small island which lies a little below the spot where our operations were being carried on. We certainly heard a noise in the brushwood on the island, but paid no attention to it. Suddenly two boats appeared and made rapidly towards us. We were just preparing to receive them with the little hand-torpedoes which Skrydloff had got ready in the event of a hand-to-hand fight, when the supposed enemies disclosed themselves as Cossacks, who had reached the island before us to cover our operations. Their presence was due to Skobeleff, and, to say the truth, was not of the slightest use.

From the direction of Rustchuk a Turkish steamer began firing on our flotilla, but without doing any damage at all. 'Nikolai Larionovitch,' said I to Skrydloff, 'why do you not attack her?' 'Why touch her, when she does not come close and her firing does no harm?' The steamer soon steamed away, probably to fetch assistance. Then Novikoff's torpedo-boat hastened up to us. 'Nikolai Larionovitch, why do you not attack that ironclad?' 'That is not an ironclad, but a steamer; I thought you only ordered an attack in the event of her coming near.' 'I ordered you to attack in any case. Have the goodness to do it.' 'Very good, sir.'

Novikoff went back again to the works. 'Now, my good fellow,' I said to Skrydloff, 'you will see, if the torpedoes are badly laid, you will be the scapegoat; any failure will be set down to you.' 'Now I shall attack; my orders are now plain and clear.'

Skrydloff gave orders that all should be made ready. He took up his position in the bows, where he could keep his eye on the helm and the bow torpedo. To me he entrusted the floating stern torpedo, in the handling of which he had already instructed me, and told me when I was to throw it, and when to give the word 'Fire!'

To freshen up his men a little, he ordered them to wash. 'Won't you wash?' he asked of me. 'Done it already.' 'But you have no soap.'

There was nothing for it: I was obliged to wash again with soap.

We all put on cork belts, in case the 'Shutka' should blow up and we should fall into the water, which, indeed, would be the most likely consequence of the explosion. We ate a little chicken, took a sip of sherry, and then my friend lay down to take a nap, and, by Heaven! his iron nerves suffered him actually to fall asleep!

I did not sleep: I stood at the stern leading on to the iron roof which covers the engines, and looked up stream toward Rustchuk. 'She is coming!'

called out one of the sailors in a low voice. And, true enough, between the bank and the tall trees of the little island which concealed the channel of the Danube, smoke was rising and rapidly approaching.

'Nikolai Larionovitch, get up: she is coming.' Skrydloff started up: 'Push off! Go ahead! Full speed!' We flew rapidly along. The Turkish vessel was not yet visible. 'Nikolai Larionovitch,' I called out to him again, 'a little slower, so that we may meet her nearer here; otherwise we shall run on to the Turkish bank!' 'None of that, old fellow. You heard my instructions. I should go now even to Rustchuk!' 'Well, go ahead!'

The steamer came on; compared with the 'Shutka' she seemed to be enormously large.

Skrydloff steered straight at her, and with the speed of a locomotive we rushed upon her.

What confusion there was!—not only on board the ship, but also on the bank. They, no doubt, guessed that the little nutshell was carrying destruction to the steamer.

The riflemen and Tcherkesses on the bank rushed headlong into the water, in order to fire from as short a distance as possible. The bullets rained down upon us; the whole bank was wrapped in thick smoke. On the deck of the steamer the

crew were running about in great consternation. We saw the officers rush to the helm and turn the ship to the bank; and at the same time they gave us with their heavy guns such a salvo as made the poor 'Shutka' stagger in her course.

'Now you are in for it,' I thought to myself, 'and you won't get out alive.' I took off my boots, and advised Skrydloff to do the same. The sailors followed our example.

I then looked round. Not one of the torpedo-boats was following us. It was supposed that something had happened to their engines.

Whatever was the cause, the 'Shutka' was alone, absolutely alone, and the squadron far behind. The fire became unbearable. Our vessel trembled under the rain of rifle-bullets; the cannon-shot shook her so that she seemed to be going to pieces. There were already several holes in her sides, and one at the stern, near the spot where I stood, was almost on the water-line; the iron roof that protected the engines had also been pierced. The sailors hid themselves at the bottom of the sloop, and covered themselves with whatever they could lay hands on; so that nothing was to be seen of them, except part of the face of one gunner, who was holding a buoy in front of him for protection, but was otherwise as motionless as a statue. Now

we were quite close to the steamer. The crashing and screaming made by the bullets and shells as they poured into the 'Shutka' became worse and worse.

Suddenly I saw Skrydloff, who was sitting at the helm, draw himself together,—he had been hit by a bullet, and was almost immediately hit again.

Our engineer, looking very pale, had taken off his cap and was praying; but at this moment he took courage, and, drawing out his watch, called to Skrydloff as we were on the point of delivering our blow, 'Nikolai Larionovitch, five minutes past eight.'

In spite of the danger, I observed with curiosity the Turks on the steamer as we came close up to her. They stood there as if turned to stone, their hands raised and stretched out, and their heads bent down towards us.

At the last moment our steersman got nervous; he steered to the right, and the current carried us away from the steamer. Skrydloff turned sharply upon him: 'To the left, or you are a dead man,' and seized the helm himself. The 'Shutka' turned, came slowly alongside the hull of the steamer, and touched her with her torpedo-spar. At this moment there was the deepest silence among us as

well as the enemy; still as death, we awaited the explosion.

'Has she gone off?' asked the gunner, who was crouching at the bottom of the boat.

'Not yet,' I answered in a whisper.

'Fire!' again cried Skrydloff; but again no explosion followed.

In the meantime the current had got hold of us, and our broken torpedo-spar became entangled in the steamer's ropes. The Turks recovered their presence of mind and poured a worse fire than ever upon us from the bank. When the torpedo-spar had been cut away at Skrydloff's command, we at length got free. The steamer turned broadside on, and raised such waves that the 'Shutka,' which had been badly injured, began to fill with water; in addition to this misfortune, the engines worked slower and slower, so that we should have made no way at all but for the current.

Supposing that we were going to the bottom the next moment, I stood up and put one foot on the gunwale. Then came a violent crash under me and a blow on my hip—such a blow as might have come from an axe. I fell headlong, but got up again directly.

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The current carried us along very near to the Turkish bank, whence the Turks now fired in close proximity. It was truly a wonder that they did not kill us all. They ran along behind and fired at us, abusing us, as we could distinctly hear, into the bargain. I tried to answer with a few shots,

SKRYDLOFF.

but soon gave it up, as I saw the uselessness of the attempt.

The current carried us a considerable distance away. In our rear was a line of trading-vessels which were at anchor between the bank and the little island in the right arm of the river. On the left stretched the same island with its large many-

branched willows; the arm of the river at this spot is very narrow. The steamer did not pursue us, but from the fort an ironclad was making towards us at full steam; the steamer had probably summoned her to help.

'Nikolai Larionovitch!' I cried, as loud as I could (for the firing drowned our voices), 'Nikolai Larionovitch, do you see the ironclad?' 'Of course I do.' 'What do you mean to do?' 'Attack her with your torpedo: get it ready.'

For us, who were half sunk and borne along by the current, an attack was a difficult matter; but there was no other course open. The ironclad came up and fired twice at us. The rope which held the torpedo was cut through, and I told the gunner to be ready to launch it. Then suddenly, to our joy, the arm of the river came in sight at the end of the island on the left, and by calling upon our engines for a final effort we just escaped.

Here at last we breathed freely. Large ships could no longer follow us, and the ironclad had to be content with firing a shot after us.

As the 'Shutka' was sinking deeper and deeper, Skrydloff gave orders to wrap the hull round with sailcloth; thus we might hope to get home in safety.

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Protected by the little island, we examined our injuries more closely. The 'Shutka' was completely crushed by the shots, and seemed as if she would be of no further use; she was pierced not only above but also below the water-line: we threw overboard several handfuls of the enemy's bullets. Skrydloff had two wounds in his legs and a bruised hand; I had been wounded in the fleshy part of the thigh. When I got on my feet after the blow, although I was able to stand upright, yet I felt a discomfort in my right leg, and I began to feel the part. My trousers were pierced in two places, and my finger went right into the flesh. Oh! am I really wounded? Such was the fact: my whole hand was bloody. And so this is being wounded! how simple it is!—I had always thought it was much more complicated. The bullet or grapeshot struck the bottom of the sloop, and as it rebounded pierced the muscle of the hip close to the bone. If the latter had been hit, death would have been certain.

Not one of the sailors was wounded. Curiously enough, it now came out that the terrible fire had cut the conducting wire and had thereby prevented the explosion of the torpedo. 'The conducting wires are broken, sir,' reported the gunner to Skrydloff. 'Impossible.' 'It is so:

will you kindly look yourself.' Skrydloff was not a little pleased at this, for now the accusation of ignorance, want of skill, or even of carelessness, which his friends would certainly have brought against him, could not be raised. As we left the steamer behind us, Skrydloff only complained that the breaking of the spar and the want of steam did not allow a repetition of the attack with the bow torpedo. To be sure, we were then running straight at the ironclad, and we could still have made an attack with the stern torpedo; but this prospect seemed to interest him much less. My friend tore his hair, and cried with such a voice of despair that I really pitied him: 'So much work, trouble, and preparation, and all in vain.' 'Do stop,' I called to him; 'what is the use of this despair? It was a failure, but not from ignorance.' And when our Nikolai Larionovitch discovered that under the actual circumstances an explosion could not follow, he became more cheerful and his distress vanished.

The only question that remained to be decided was why the second torpedo-boat had not followed us when we made our attack. We found no answer. We are justified in believing that this was the first and the last occasion on which an enemy's ship was attacked by a single torpedo-boat.

On the whole the result was satisfactory, for the steamer as well as the ironclad turned tail. And therefore the object of the attack had been attained.

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I may here be allowed to say a few words about volunteers, who are declared by a specialist in Kronstadt to be only an incumbrance in battle. My opinion is just the reverse of this. If a volunteer understands discipline, and also the affair in hand, he will as a matter of course be not only brave, but (what is very important) cool also. When, for example, the second torpedo had to be got ready, the gunner was so timid that he unconsciously turned round and round as if he was looking for something. I pulled out my knife to cut the cord. Another gunner also seemed not to have all his wits about him before the attack; for without any necessity he touched the conducting apparatus which carries the current to the torpedo when we were still at a considerable distance from the enemy. And the steersman already mentioned steered, in his nervousness, in a wrong direction, and, moreover, turned to Skrydloff and asked him if it were not better to pass. All these instances seemed to me to prove that a sailor or a soldier

who is *forced* to go forwards does not do so with the same degree of composure and presence of mind as the volunteer who wishes to go forwards.

After we had left our place of refuge Skrydloff went to Novikoff to report. All the officers were standing on the bank. They did not seem to know what had happened to us, for the island had hidden us from sight during the attack.

'Did you blow them up?' they called out as we came towards them. 'No,' replied Skrydloff; 'their fire was too heavy and cut the conducting wires. Vassily Vassilievitch and I are wounded.' General silence followed, in which disapproval was manifest; only the kindly Novikoff threw Skrydloff a kiss and thanked him for the unequal combat.

Our men rested, breakfasted, and got ready to move on. They dragged us up the Roumanian bank. A stretcher was made of oars and Skrydloff laid upon it; I went on foot. During the excitement I felt neither pain nor fatigue, but by the time we had gone a mile I was leaning nearly my whole weight on the sailors who were supporting me. On the bank we met Skobeleff and Strukoff, who had watched the laying of the torpedoes from a distance. Skobeleff, who embraced and kissed us, cried, 'What brave fellows, brave fellows!'

This bravest of the brave was evidently envious because he had not been wounded. They took us into the village of Parapan, where we were lodged in the house of a landowner; it was the house where Wulfert lived and where I had made Dragomiroff's acquaintance.

Soon after, a battery of horse-artillery came at a gallop from Giurgevo and began unlimbering their guns just opposite the spot where the blue-jackets were resting. Strukoff gave notice to the flotilla in good time, and it was able to move away up stream to lay the other line of torpedoes. The battery fired upon the boats and the things which the sailors had imprudently left scattered about, and bombarded our house. On this occasion I made the officers who were present laugh, quite unintentionally. It happened thus: they proposed that we should migrate to a peasant's house farther up the village, so as to be out of range. Skrydloff assented; but I objected, because staying in a peasant's house presented a prospect of flea-bites; and I still think my objection was not ill-founded.

II.

THE PASSAGE OF THE BALKANS. SKOBELEFF. 1877–1878.

In order to join Skobeleff's detachment I left Plevna. At Bogot, where our headquarters then were, I sent in my name to the commander-in-chief, who received me at once in the kindest manner. In the course of conversation I sketched for him the outline of the Turkish fortifications at Shandornik on the high road to Sofia, and a rough plan of our positions. The Grand Duke was rather excited, because Gourko was to come down from the mountains at that place on that very day. 'Ah, if it only succeeds! if it only succeeds!' repeated the Grand Duke Nicholas, passing his hand over his forehead as if he would drive away his apprehensions. I assured him there was no cause for fear: Gourko's troops would certainly leave the mountains without fail. 'Then *au revoir* —there,' he added, pointing with his hand in the direction of the Balkans.

Owing to the lateness of the hour I could get nothing to eat at headquarters, and was obliged to appease my hunger in a sutler's tent. It was very

late indeed when I started on the road to Loftsha, on my long-legged Caucasian horse.

To my great grief, I was soon obliged to

M. D. SKOBELEFF.

acknowledge to myself that the new horse I had recently bought was fit for nothing. It could neither walk, nor trot, nor gallop. 'Buying horses of Prince O. is to be discontinued in future,'

said I to myself; for he had sold me a used-up nag.

At a Turkish village five versts from Loftsha I halted for the night. As I was asking for admission into one of the houses a soldier came running up to me. 'Please not to knock, sir; we are here to assign quarters.' 'Then show me some quickly.' I was quartered somewhere at the end of the village, but the cottage was clean. They brought me a chicken, and gave my horse hay, and even oats, which would have been scarcely obtainable in a Bulgarian village. In the Bulgarian villages we did and took what we liked, but the Turkish villages were protected from this treatment by the military authorities. The privilege we exercised as friends and brothers was, as may be seen, not exactly advantageous to the Bulgarians.

My stay in Loftsha did not last long. I entered it in the morning, and left in the evening of the same day. The town lies in a valley, protected by the steep bank of the Osma and by surrounding hills, which were so strongly fortified that we should scarcely have taken it but for Skobeleff.

The storming of Loftsha was bloody indeed; the dead literally filled the trenches, my brother told me. Skobeleff's composure on that day, he said,

struck him as most astonishing. Among other incidents, my brother mentioned the following: 'Skobeleff gave me orders to lead a battalion to a certain point. We marched on as long as there were buildings to shelter us; but when we came to the open ground, advance was quite impossible. Whoever tried it fell down dead or wounded. I dismounted and halted the battalion, seeing that a further advance meant its annihilation. But just at that moment what do I see but Skobeleff riding calmly at a walk across the fatal space, with shot and shell whistling round him! When I saw him I reproached myself bitterly for my cowardice.'

On leaving Loftsha I fell in with the commander-in-chief's drunken coachman. The inebriated charioteer was noisy, and quarrelled with everybody on the high road. When I requested him to leave me room to pass, he replied with abuse. I struck out with my whip and gave him a cut. This proved effectual, but the drunken fellow threatened me with a complaint to his master; to which I also urged him, in order that the Grand Duke might learn what a bad coachman he was, and get rid of him.

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I reached the town of Selvi, whither my brother had been sent immediately after the passage of the Danube. The Bashibazouks had threatened to plunder and burn the town, and the terrified inhabitants had sent a deputation to the Grand Duke to beg for assistance.

My brother, who had sent off his brigade to reconnoitre, happened to be at hand, and the Grand Duke despatched him with his half-sotnia of Caucasian Cossacks against the Turks. He easily accomplished his mission. The inhabitants of the town presented him in consequence with a very curious address of thanks, which enumerated his deeds. During my stay in Selvi I had an opportunity of discovering in the bazaar that his name was very popular. On making a purchase, it was sufficient to order that the goods should be delivered to 'Alexander'; the merchants at once knew who was meant; the whole town, in fact, knew that Selvi's deliverer was back again.

Skobeleff arrived at Selvi. I found him engaged with the divisional commanders. When I gave him a message from the Grand Duke, he observed, 'Radetski will not go to the rescue; he says "Go if you like; I shall not stir." Well, we will go and, if necessary, die gloriously.' That

was Skobeleff's favourite phrase. But I hoped that it would not come to that, for I did not so much want to die gloriously as to witness the passage of the troops over the snow-covered mountains, and the decisive battle which now seemed inevitable.

The plan of crossing the Balkans by turning the enemy's position at the Shipka had been projected long before by General Radetski, or, to speak more correctly, by the chief of his staff, Dmitroffski. The plan had been approved at headquarters, but the serious state of affairs at Plevna prevented its execution. Now Plevna had fallen, and the plan which had been laid aside was taken up again. Two columns, commanded respectively by Generals Sviatopolk-Mirski and Skobeleff, were fitted out to conduct this flank movement, and Radetski received corresponding orders.

Radetski was alarmed. 'I certainly proposed this plan,' so ran his answer, 'but at a time when there was no snow on the mountains. It is no longer practicable.' Dmitroffski was extremely perturbed: in his opinion the columns would inevitably be swallowed up in the banks and drifts of snow. The Grand Duke, however, kept to his purpose, and the columns were despatched under Skobeleff and Sviatopolk-Mirski. When Radetski

saw that his protests were unheeded, he washed his hands of the matter. 'Let them go,' he said; 'I shall not stir, for I have not taken leave of my senses.'

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Skobeleff and Kuropatkin (the chief of his staff) had no small trouble in procuring the necessary means of transport for the division. Skobeleff, with that thoughtfulness and prudence which always characterized him, had long before prepared saddles and everything necessary for his division (the 16th), and had had them sent to Selvi and Tirnovo. But Sviatopolk-Mirski's division, passing through these places before him, took these supplies in requisition without further ceremony. So everything had to be procured afresh. Kuropatkin hastened to Tirnovo. With the support of the governor, Stcherbinski, he succeeded in a few days in procuring what was necessary.

We soon advanced towards Gabrovo. The commander-in-chief and his staff were to take up their quarters in Selvi. Gabrovo was very lively: the whole place was in commotion. At Skobeleff's dinner-table new faces appeared, the divisional commanders of his detachment, some of them—for instance, a colonel of the rifles—very original

characters. Skobeleff, among other matters, bade us remember that during the passage of the Balkans he should not keep open table—not very pleasant news for us, though, for myself, I had a little store of preserves and necessaries for cooking.

In the town there was ceaseless stir, noise, and confusion. A vast mass of people of all kinds rolled continuously through the streets. It is really wonderful that spies did not slip in among them, who might have betrayed to the Turks our preparations for turning their position. As it was, the Turks were taken completely by surprise; it had never occurred to them that danger could threaten them on their flank at such a season.

I had ridden out with X., one of Skobeleff's orderlies, to see some of his Bulgarian acquaintances. On our return I met the General in the square. 'I am looking for a horse,' he said, praising my ambling nag. 'Take this one.' 'No, thank you,' Skobeleff replied; 'I must have a grey. Is there not a grey?' 'I have a grey,' said I, 'but it is small and will scarcely carry you.' From the dragoons he got a handsome white horse. Later, as I was riding to the Shipka to visit some old acquaintance, I met Skobeleff coming back from there at a gallop through deep

snow. 'The new horse,' thought I to myself, 'will not hold out long.'

Skobeleff had seen Radetski again, received orders from him, and heard again from his own lips that he would not stir. That same evening, when I paid a visit to my old Turkestan acquaintance, General Dmitroffski, at Gabrovo, I found him much excited. He could not accustom himself to the idea of a winter campaign at all, and far into the night he talked to me of the imprudence, not to say folly, of our advance.

Skobeleff, on the other hand, was convinced that the undertaking would be successful. When we started for the village of Temenli the troops were already beyond that place.

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My Cossack, Kurbatoff, was, of course, not ready at the time of departure, and I was imprudent enough to leave him behind at his request till the following day. He was to overtake me; but, to my no small vexation, several days passed by, and there were no signs of my Cossack. On the way I had to do without several things, and I was therefore glad when I reached Temenli. Night had set in. I was soon obliged to give up my

hopes of a night's lodging, for every room in the village had been filled to overflowing since the morning. I forced my way into Skobeleff's quarters, but he had already retired to rest, and lay in that deep sleep which he generally enjoyed before the commencement of an important undertaking. I endeavoured in vain to reconcile this power of sleep with Skobeleff's highly strung nerves.

At the quarters of the chief doctor of the division (with whom, if I remember right, I had become acquainted at one of the ambulance tents at Plevna) I was fortunate enough to get a glass of tea. I passed the night on the floor of a cottage; my fellow-lodgers were unknown to me. The next morning my Cossack had still not arrived with my things. I promised myself never to leave him behind again.

The troops were already marching up the mountains in long lines. In order to reach Skobeleff I had to force my way past them, which it was not easy to do without almost impaling oneself on the bayonets. For nearly four-and-twenty hours previously the sappers had been at work shovelling away the snow; but a good deal still lay on the road, while on each side it was piled up in walls as high as a man. It was therefore impossible to

leave the road. The soldiers laughed and joked as they marched. 'Raise your bayonets; hold your bayonets out of the way,' rank after rank called out when a horseman appeared, 'or else he will poke his eyes out.' One had regularly to practise gymnastics in the saddle in order to avoid the bayonets of the soldiers as they climbed the steep ascent, and to keep one's knees from knocking against their knapsacks. As it was, I bruised my knee finely.

The hardest work fell to the lot of a sotnia of Ural Cossacks, who were marching at the head with guides. They had to wade through masses of snow, and their horses often sank altogether. They were commanded by Sotnik Kirilin, whom I had known in Turkestan. These Cossacks were followed by the sappers already mentioned, one company strong, under the command of Laskofski, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief.

A sad sight met us at one spot on the road. A group of musicians were resting on a mound of snow just off the road, huddled together, shivering with cold. The instruments in their cases, some of them of huge size, lay round about in the snow. Poor musicians!

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We halted rather early on a high plain opposite the mountains called the 'Pillars of Marcus.' Under some trees to the right a resting-place was made for Skobeleff in the snow; our camping-place was close by, near the road. A small supply of preserves, coffee, and chocolate was produced from my stores and immediately consumed, as no one else had brought anything. We fed the horses too with preserved fodder, but they did not seem to care about it. The troops also encamped round about us, and their camp-fires blazed up in all directions; for though the light of these fires might have betrayed us to the Turks, Skobeleff thought that human enemies were not so much to be feared as the frost, which was very severe. It was most fortunate for the detachment that there was no snowstorm, not even wind. It must also be mentioned that Skobeleff's care extended to everything: all the soldiers had waist-belts, and on their feet bandages soaked in tallow; moreover, each soldier had with him tea and cold meat. Finally, in order to ward off the danger of being frozen to death, the order had been given that the soldiers were not to let each other go to sleep.

I covered myself with everything I had—a felt cloak, a rug, and a fur cape; and yet I felt, although I lay close to the fire, that I was begin-

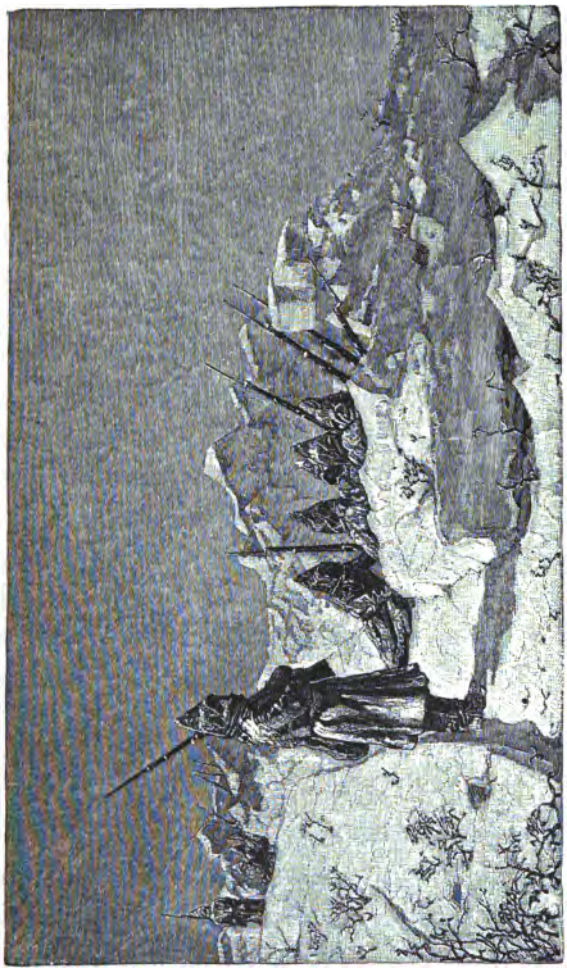
ning to get numb with cold. However much I twisted and turned, it was of no use ; I was obliged to renounce the hope of sleep. I got up, lighted a cigar, and awaited the coming day by the fire.

A portion of the troops resumed their march while it was yet dark, and we followed them at the first signs of dawn. I was just sketching the trenches which had been made in the snow on the side facing the Turkish position, when Skobeleff overtook and passed us, making his horse gallop even on this road.

The astonishment of the Turks as we came out of the woods on the open slope of the mountain facing them may be imagined. They tried to fire a few shots at us, but could not hurt us, as we were not yet within the range of their guns.

From the point we had now reached the positions of the Turkish troops, as well as of our own, were clearly visible. We saw Mount St. Nicholas, on which our brave soldiers were awaiting with impatience the result of the march by which we were turning the Turkish position, for it would bring them release from their wearisome sojourn in the snowy mud-huts of the Shipka Pass. There was the Turkish position on the 'Bald Mountain,' as it was called, the Turks standing in large groups, and probably talking of what fate

had in store for them. They were no longer able to hinder our march; in this snow an attack on



ENTRENCHMENT ON THE SHIPKA.

our flank was not to be thought of; it would be very un-Turkish, for the Turks do not like the snow. They might have prevented our descent, but we were already in the act of descending.

At the top, where it began to descend, the road ran between two considerable heights. Being an old soldier, I at once observed to Kuropatkin that both these heights ought immediately to be strongly occupied. 'What are you saying?' asked Skobeleff, who was at that moment riding just in front of us. 'I said that these heights which command the descent ought in any case to be occupied.' 'Yes, yes. Alexi Nicholaiewitch,' turning to Kuropatkin, 'that is right; have the heights occupied at once, and let the men entrench themselves.' 'Very well, sir,' replied the colonel, not altogether pleased; for military men do not like listening to the advice of a civilian—although I perhaps had a better claim to call myself a soldier than most of the officers of the detachment. Skobeleff, however, was above that sort of thing, and was always ready to follow sensible advice, from whomsoever it might come.

Colonel Kuropatkin is undoubtedly one of the best officers in the army: small, and with not a particularly good figure, but clever and cool-headed. In many traits of his character he was exactly the

opposite of Skobeleff, who esteemed him very highly, although he constantly found himself at variance with him. In such discussions the chief of the staff, with his cool and calculating spirit, was generally more in the right than the fiery general who was so easily carried away; but this was only the case in details and subordinate matters, for Skobeleff's view of large questions was certainly keener. For instance, with regard to the possibility of a winter march over the Balkans—a question on whose decision the whole issue of the war largely depended—Kurapotkin was of the opinion of Radetski and Dmitroski; i.e. he was entirely against this expedition, and called it a mad, ruinous proceeding, &c. Skobeleff, on the other hand, was in favour of the expedition, and was firmly convinced that it would have a successful termination. 'And if we do not get across we shall die gloriously,' he would say, repeating his favourite expression.

'He has only one idea: let us die, let us die!' Kuropatkin once said to me as early as Plevna. 'There is no difficulty in dying; only one must be sure that it is worth while to die!'

News soon came from the advanced guard of sappers that the Turks were moving towards us. I saw the colour come in Skobeleff's cheeks. He

turned immediately to the soldiers with the words, 'I congratulate you, brothers; the Turks are coming!' The soldiers answered as usual—'We will do our best, Excellency!' Dukmassoff, one of the orderlies, was sent to the assistance of the sappers with two companies.

The descent was almost more difficult than the ascent; in some places the horses sank up to their necks in the snow; and most grateful I was to my brave steed for the desperate efforts with which he carried me out of the holes without even stumbling! In many places, however, it was absolutely impossible to ride; one had to *slide* down. The soldiers slid down, chaffing and joking as if they were enjoying a holiday on the ice-slopes at home. I am no longer able to say how I came down a certain steep place with my horse; we probably both slid down on our haunches. To have made a good road would, of course, have required much time; on the other hand, it was beyond measure difficult (there is no such thing in the world as an impossibility) to get the cavalry down, and still more the artillery.

We were already on the southern slope of the Balkans. Skobeleff had remained on one of the furthermost heights, and surveyed for a long time the valley of the Tunja and the Turkish posi-

tions which stretched out before us. On the left lay Mount St. Nicholas with the Shipka. The positions of our troops were sharply defined in black lines. There, on the rock of Mount St. Nicholas, is Mesherski's battery; there I sketched the guns and the country round, bending my head first to one side and then to the other, in order to avoid the bullets, shells, and bombs which came whistling from the Turkish batteries behind the mountains. (On the Shipka the bombs were christened 'crows.') There stood the ruins of a Turkish block-house, from the window of which I wanted to make a sketch of the Tunja Valley; but I was simply driven out by three shells. The first buried itself in the wall; the second flew on to the roof and covered me with sand and all kinds of things, although I was sitting on the other side of the house; the third monster struck and pierced the roof close to me with an outrageous noise, and threw such a mass of earth and rubbish upon me that I went away without finishing my picture; the colours on my palette had received such a strong admixture of foreign particles that I was obliged to throw them away. A little farther there rose from the hill the round central battery, and in between were the mud-huts of Minski's regiment, with whom I had spent some days as the guest of

my friend N. Beyond was a succession of well-known spots: on that side of the hill, the Turkish 'Nine Scale' battery; further on, the 'Crow's-nest' and 'Sugarloaf' batteries. Below the Russian positions came the Turkish mud-huts and batteries again. Right down in the valley, from the ruins of the village of Shipka to the village of Shenovo, stretched fortified hills, which formed the centre of the Turkish position. To the right was a thick oak wood belonging to the village of Shenovo, which seemed also to be strongly fortified. Still more to the right, i.e. just in front of our path, stretched the chain of the Little Balkans. Across the valley, to the right, lay the village of Imetli, after which the pass is sometimes named. Finally, quite to the right, the Tunja Valley stretched away. Skobeleff sometimes gazed earnestly in that direction, for from that quarter it was rumoured that Turkish troops were coming to the relief of the Shipka.

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The troops halted in the ravine, but Skobeleff as usual went on in front to reconnoitre the way. He wanted to go on horseback, but the Turks opened such a hot fire from a short distance that we were all obliged to dismount. With him were

Kuropatkin (the chief of his staff), Count Keller, myself, and a few Cossacks. The Turks had established themselves on the rocks nearest the road, and poured upon us a regular shower of bullets. Our men tried to dislodge them, but our wretched Krenke rifles would not carry so far. I halted in order to make a sketch of the scene. Skobeleff had gone on a little in front, when suddenly I saw Kuropatkin coming back towards me pale as death, and supported by a soldier on each side. He stopped to take breath behind the same jutting rock under cover of which I was drawing. A ball had struck him in the left shoulder, and, after grazing the bone, had passed out through the back. The poor fellow had quite collapsed, and begged that we would examine his wound and tell him whether it was fatal or not. Skobeleff also now rejoined us, and we all began to make our way back, Kuropatkin, of course, being carried.

I have often been under heavy fire, but never before had I experienced such a murderous rain of bullets. Even the fire at the torpedo attack on the Danube, when our boat was fired upon by the Turks and Tcherkesses and by the Turkish ships, does not seem to me to have been so heavy. The Turks fired upon us at close range, and one bullet

chased another, whistling past our ears, striking the rocks there, here falling or rebounding at our feet. My horse and Skobeleff's were uninjured, but my Bulgarian's horse was killed, and over a hundred men and horses fell besides. I walked on Skobeleff's left hand, and I confess that the clatter of the firearms (which sounded something like the rolling of drums) and the whistling of the bullets made one rather anxious. One could not help thinking, 'You will be knocked down directly, and then you will learn what you wanted to learn—the meaning of war.' I remember, however, that in spite of this I could not refrain from watching Skobeleff. I wanted to see whether he would not involuntarily bend his head, affected by the whistling bullets; but no, he does not bend—not in the least. Is there no involuntary movement perceptible in the muscles of the face or of the hands? No: his face is quiet, and his hands buried, as usual, in the pockets of his overcoat. Is there not a certain unrest in his eyes, which I should have noticed even if he had wished to hide it? No—at least it seems not; a certain passionless look points at most to a deep-buried inward excitement. I still see him before me, striding along with his customary careless walk, his head bent a little on one side. 'The

devil take it!' I thought; 'he seems to go slower and slower: does he do it on purpose?' There was really a hellish din: men and horses falling on all sides. Kuropatkin, the brave Kuropatkin, calls out from the rear; 'Let those who are sound run; we shall all be annihilated.' Count Keller and one or two others rushed ahead; I, who had been in many a rain of bullets before, stayed with Skobeleff. 'Well, Vassily Vassilievitch,' said Skobeleff to me presently, when a turn in the road at last gave us shelter from the Turkish bullets, 'now we know what running the gauntlet means.'

I was interested in learning what Skobeleff's feelings were in face of great danger, and I asked him afterwards: 'Tell me honestly: have you really so accustomed yourself to war that you no longer fear danger? I confess that I am always inwardly a little alarmed when a shell falls near me, or a bullet whistles past the tip of my nose.' 'Nonsense!' he rejoined; 'they think that I am brave and that I am afraid of nothing; but I confess that I am a *coward*. Whenever I go into action I say to myself that this time there will be an end of me. When a bullet grazed me on the Green Mountains and I fell, my first thought was: "Now, brother, thy play is ended."' It

pleased me to hear such a confession, for after it my own character seemed less timid. Not that I ever set a particularly high value on courage, but I had an extreme aversion to cowardice—a quality which I had occasions of observing. As I felt very uncomfortable, and was generally afraid, each time that I came under heavy fire, that a ball would lay me low at once, I was glad that Skobeleff also by no means faced death with indifference, but understood how to conceal his feelings. 'I have made it a rule,' he said, 'never to bend down under fire. If you once permit yourself to do that, you will be drawn on farther than you wish.'

I am now of opinion that no man ever is quite calm at heart under fire.

Kuropatkin was bandaged, and then carried back on a litter, over the Balkans, to the hospital at Gabrovo. He said to us: 'Listen to my last advice: make haste and drive these Turks from their position, at any cost, or they will make terrible havoc among our troops.'

Skobeleff gave orders to storm the position; but Colonel Paniutin, to whom the orders were given, begged leave to try first to dislodge the enemy by a fusilade. He had a battalion armed with Peabody rifles, which had been taken from the Turks

at Plevna. Two companies with these weapons poured a perfect shower of bullets on the Turks, and after a few minutes not a man of the enemy was to be seen—not a shot more was fired by him. I have never seen a more striking proof of what good arms can do. It was not without reason that at Plevna our soldiers, driven to despair by the behaviour of their clumsy converted muskets, whose locks would not work, seized them by the bayonets and dashed them to pieces against stones or trees, exclaiming: 'If you are of no use, you shall not exist.'

Paniutin with his Peabodies had undoubtedly saved the lives of many soldiers; for an assault on the Turks, who were firmly ensconced behind jutting rocks, could not have taken place without heavy loss. How many human lives would have been saved on our side altogether if we had had good rifles at the beginning of the war, or if, even later, our troops had been armed with the rifles taken at Plevna! There were some tens of thousands of them, with millions of cartridges! This measure had actually been talked of, but, as I heard, we were *ashamed* to do it! One can only wonder how anybody can have been ashamed to admit what the whole army knew, and talked of loudly, namely, that our converted rifles, compared

to the Turkish weapons, were good for nothing. In the same way our troops crossed the Balkans with nothing but Krenke rifles in their hands, while tens of thousands of Peabodies lay in piles in the snow all the time that I was at Plevna (nearly a fortnight), with boxes full of cartridges. Vast numbers of the latter were strewn on the road and beside it to a distance of several miles, and, as nobody thought of collecting them, they exploded in quantities as the baggage-wagons passed over them.

At the halting-place in the ravine we parted from Kuropatkin. The poor fellow, as I have said, was conveyed over the same terrible roads back to Gabrovo. It seemed as if a tear glistened in Skobeleff's eye, but he pulled himself together quickly—'Colonel Count Keller, you will undertake the post of chief of the staff?' 'Very good, Excellency.' 'There is promotion at once,' said Kuropatkin dryly, as he was carried away. His loss was deeply felt by us all. To Skobeleff it was, as he said, irreparable.

It is strange how a wound will often change a man suddenly and completely, sometimes without its being noticed by himself or by others. Kuropatkin is carried in a litter over these impracticable roads through the pass; he is, of course, constantly

shaken—thrown first to one side, and then to the other; sometimes even he is dropped right into the snow, so that his strong nerves can scarcely endure it. He meets the cavalry on their march, and in conversation with their colonel he says, among other things, 'It is a devilish road; I do not know how you will get across.' The colonel of the regiment, impressed by these words, forgets that he is not speaking to the chief of the staff but to a wounded man; he halts his regiment and sends Skobeleff a report of the insurmountable difficulties of the road. But Skobeleff gets angry, and is beside himself at the long delay of the cavalry. He naturally at once gives orders that the march is to be continued at any price.

If a wounded soldier brought from the battle-field is asked how matters stand there he generally answers: 'Badly, sir. We are getting the worst of it; they are giving us a beating; they are too many for us.' *He* is worsted, *he* is beaten, and it seems to *him* that *everything* is lost. It appears to me that it ought to be a rule that no wounded man, from the private to the commander-in-chief, should be allowed to remain at the front, extreme cases, of course, excepted.

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Skobeleff seemed, as it were, thrown off his balance by Kuropatkin's wound. Taking me aside, he constantly asked: 'What do you think of my arrangements, V. V.? Is it all right? Count Keller is a good officer, but inexperienced. I am afraid that there may be some confusion.' I tried to calm him by saying that it seemed to me that at present everything was going on as it ought. 'Have you occupied the heights which command the pass?' 'Yes, the men have marched off already.' 'Have you given them orders to entrench themselves?' 'Yes.' 'Be sure that they carry out the order.' It still makes me laugh when I think how the brave orderly, X., who was despatched with this order, on seeing soldiers on the heights, took them for Turks.

But Skobeleff with his nervous nature could not be easy. 'You have been with Gourko, Vassily Vassilievitch: tell me, on your honour, was there greater order under him than under me?' 'No, I should not think so; but he was calmer.' 'Am I, then, so very impatient?' 'Oh, just a little; see how you have sent several orderlies to one and the same place with the same orders.'

I remember another scene at Plevna. Just after I had returned from the guards' quarters, in

friendly conversation with an officer, I was defending Gourko against various unjust attacks. Skobeleff was present at this conversation. Very jealous of Gourko's independent position, for the latter had nearly a whole army under him, he cavilled at my impartiality, and growled sarcastically, 'Well, now you have found a great warrior.'

Not long after, Laskofski, the commander-in-chief's aide-de-camp, was slightly wounded.

The general had ordered Colonel Paniutin to drive the Turks out of the trenches which they held below the road which led from the pass; in the evening General Stoletoff took the village of Imetli. We passed the night in our ravine round a fire which we were scarcely able to keep up with the damp twigs. Here were Skobeleff, Stoletoff, Laskofski, myself, and Skobeleff's aides-de-camp; I do not remember whether Count Keller, who had a great deal to do that night, was present or not.

Our gallant correspondent, M. D., was not there; he was probably down in Imetli. I do not know whether Skobeleff slept—perhaps he was able to sleep even here; but as for myself, though fatigue overpowered me from time to time, I never really got to sleep. We did not eat anything, but

only drank a glass of tea each. Laskofski with his wound was particularly badly off, for although he was wrapped in a fur cape he lay on the snow without any blanket. In the morning he got up with us to view the Turkish positions; but I obliged him, by main force, to go to Gabrovo to the hospital tent.

The morning was wonderfully beautiful; the little Turkish detachment at first stood at the foot of the hill, as if it would prevent our descent; but presently it retired—the enemy, it seems, was by no means distinguished for decision. Now the Turkish cannon were pointed at us, and opened fire. We could not reply, for we had no guns with us. Skobeleff was informed that it was impossible to bring up our artillery over these roads. I advised him to order that one piece at least should be brought down at any cost; the others might be left on the top. In the meantime an attempt was made to answer with our little mountain-guns; and though their fire apparently did little execution, it doubtless produced a moral effect, by reminding the enemy of their presence in our detachment.

Skobeleff begged me to make a sketch of the scene, that he might add it to his report. As a good deal was hidden from me at the spot where

we stood, I went down a little way; but the bullets whistled round me in such great numbers that I made my sketch in a great hurry, merely dashing in the outlines. The Turkish detachment was again drawn up down below. I should have liked to draw several things, but I suddenly found that I had not got my note-book with me—a book which was full of notes and sketches from the time of Plevna and Gorny-Dubnia down to the last few days. Pondering in my mind where I could have lost it, it occurred to me that the last time I had had it in my hands was when I saw Kuropatkin after he had been wounded: his wound had so upset me that I had left the book lying in the snow. I rushed to the spot, but found nothing; which was scarcely to be wondered at, as a great number of infantry and cavalry had passed over the place. Now I saw what a number of men and horses had fallen at this spot yesterday, chiefly during Skobeleff's memorable reconnaissance. One soldier had been knocked off the road, and the shell-splinter had gone through his body and chest. My note-book, however, was not to be seen anywhere. 'It is probably crying, with all its notes,' was the idea that passed through my mind.

At this moment I met an aide-de-camp of the Vladimir Regiment whom I knew. 'Do you know,'

he said, 'that they have found a note-book belonging to your late brother? The Turks must have taken it from the body and brought it here to Imetli.' 'It is most likely my note-book, for which I am looking,' I cried. 'In whose hands did you see it?' He named an officer of the Don-Cossack Regiment. I rode off at once to find him out. The regiment had already descended in its full strength, and was being drawn up by Skobeleff. At last I regained possession of my precious book. It turned out that a soldier had picked it up on the spot where I had dropped it, and had taken it with him to Imetli, but had dropped it again by a well in the village; there it had been found by a Cossack, from whom it passed into the hands of the officer.

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I returned to the place of our bivouac. It was very hot, and the snow was thawing. The soldiers stopped to drink tea; I sat down by one of them, who kindly offered me some—not indeed out of a cup, but out of the lid of his cooking-pot. I learnt from talking with him and others that the soldiers were very badly treated in the matter of tea, and still more of sugar; they did, indeed, receive for a certain number of days the

regulation number of pieces of sugar; but these pieces were so microscopically small, that they could just be seen and nothing more. Before this, when I was with Gourko's Guards, I had been astonished at the lavishness with which the commanders of the different divisions and the hospital authorities supplied this or that general, or officers' mess, with whole poods and loaves of sugar—often as many as three and four loaves. I had intended to tell Skobeleff about it, and to ask him to turn his attention to the matter; but, to my great vexation, I had quite forgotten to do so. On the whole, under Skobeleff, everything which concerned the care of the troops was arranged, comparatively speaking, in the best possible manner. He had spoken strongly to some of those who had the chief authority in these matters, and they on their part had dismissed some of their subordinates for failing to make proper provision; and if I had not forgotten at that time to tell him about it, the soldiers would probably have received more sugar for the rest of the campaign.

I found Skobeleff in conversation with Prince V., commanding one of the divisions of the Bulgarian militia; he brought the news that even to bring *one* field-piece over that road was impossible; he said, further, that the advanced guard

of Prince Mirski's detachment had come down into the valley from the other side of Shenovo, and that it could be seen from the pass. We could see in the distance, on the white expanse of snow, little black lines—regiments which were moving towards Shenovo, i.e. marching against the Turks: the booming of the guns could also be heard.

Skobeleff inquired of Prince V. what troops he had met on the way. Two regiments of the infantry division had already come down; the third regiment was in the act of descending; the whole of the cavalry, with the exception of one Cossack regiment, was still on the way.

'What do you think, Vassily Vassilievitch?' asked Skobeleff of me; 'will they soon reach Shenovo?' 'Within two hours, or two hours and a half, if the Turks let them.' 'Then ride to Paniutin and tell him to advance to the trenches.' I galloped off so quickly that my poor nag must have thought I had gone mad to ride at such speed on such roads. While still a long way above I shouted down, 'Colonel Paniutin, advance!' He was delighted at the order, took off his cap, crossed himself, and exclaimed, 'Thank God!' and went forward so rapidly that by the time I reached him by the very winding road he had already

passed the trenches. 'The general gave orders only to advance as far as the trenches at present,' I called out to him.

'We have already passed them.'

Suddenly Skobeleff came riding up to me at full gallop. 'Vassily Vassilievitch, you have told the troops to advance?'

'Yes: shall I call them back?'

'No, no; I was just going to push them further forward. Go on; I will give you the signal to halt presently.'

A terrible load of anxiety was taken off my mind. The shots from the direction of Mirski's detachment followed each other more and more quickly; the hurrahs of our men could be heard in the distance, mingled with the Turkish cries of Allah! The battle had evidently begun, and we had to hasten to give assistance.

Skobeleff was enraged that so few troops had yet come down. In spite of his despatching one orderly after another to bid them hasten, the cavalry came down very slowly, and barred the way to part of the infantry. The nature of the road, however, made it impossible to blame them.

As part of the detachment must be kept in reserve, Skobeleff had as yet but a ridiculously small force (in fact, no more than one regiment of

infantry) available for an attack. Anxious, therefore, as he was to render help, he was obliged to wait. In order, however, to divert the enemy by a demonstration, he put his men in position, and pushed forward the mountain artillery, whose fire fell just short of the mark. The back wheels were sunk a little into the ground, and the shot now fell directly down upon the enemy's batteries. I confess that I persuaded Paniutin to let our single regiment salute this success with two vigorous cheers. Three Turkish guns replied to our fire: the enemy was evidently preparing for the attack expected from our side, and a chain of mounted Tcherkesses was pushed forward along the whole village.

We were now quite close to Shenovo, and thus naturally diverted half of the enemy's force, and proportionately diminished his power of resisting the other detachment. Skobeleff resolved to assemble all his forces before delivering a decisive blow the next day. This resolut on seemed not to please the detachment. When Skobeleff told Paniutin that he would attack the Turks the next day, the latter answered, 'Alexander Nicholaievitch (Kuropatkin) is no longer here, your Excellency; it is not likely that any good will come of waiting.' 'That does not sound very com-

plimentary,' said Skobeleff. 'Have patience; you will find another opportunity.' For myself, I was convinced that this was the most sensible plan.

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It was already growing dark. The general had given orders that at nightfall the troops should retire; and I advised that fires should be lighted along the whole line of the ground they had occupied, in order to make the Turks uneasy by the apparent proximity of our advanced guard.

The other detachment also kept perfectly quiet. We learnt afterwards that there had been a fierce engagement in the course of the day. Skobeleff felt that it must be so, and, as I was with him the whole time, I saw what it cost his nervous excitable nature to restrain himself on that day and not to rush into the fire. We were often alone; he constantly drew me aside, animated by the desire to tell me his feelings frankly. 'What do you think? Was I right not to attempt an assault to-day? I know they will blame me for it; they will say that I purposely did not hasten to give help. Very well; I will retire from the service: as soon as the war is over I will immediately retire.'

'Why do you talk of retiring?' I said, trying to calm him. 'You have done what you had to do—what you were able to do. You have diverted part of the enemy's forces; to risk an assault with only one regiment was not to be thought of.' Stoletoff came up, and concurred in my opinion that it would have been extremely rash to have attacked such a strong position with the force available. Skobeleff seemed to be somewhat reassured; but his military spirit whispered constantly to him that when fighting was going on, one ought to rush into it. He recurred several times to the same topic, and said 'that he could not, and ought not, to have acted otherwise,' and 'that he should throw up his commission if they blamed him for it,' &c. I advised him to send an aide-de-camp at once to Radetski to report what had been done, and what remained to be done to-morrow, and to ask for his instructions, if they were needed. 'But it is impossible to ride off now to Radetski and to be back by the morning.' 'It is quite possible: send Dukmassoff—he is a gallant officer; tell him that he must be back to-morrow early. If he accomplishes his mission, give him a decoration; if he does not, put him under arrest.'

I went in quest of Dukmassoff, and told him he

was to prepare at once for a ride over the mountains; and the brave fellow, without the slightest sign of reluctance, went into his tent to get ready. In the course of twelve hours to ride twice over the Balkans, and, moreover, to climb up to Radetski's position, was, to say the truth, almost impossible; but Dukmassoff accomplished it in sixteen hours.

Skobeleff made the round of his troops, and ordered them to entrench themselves well, as if a serious attack were in prospect.

We returned to Imetli to take up our quarters for the night. Bivouac-fires were burning brightly along the whole line of our former position in front of the enemy.

The village furnished plenty of hay, but was badly off for dwelling-houses; all the houses had been knocked to pieces and destroyed. Unfortunately for me, the mounted Bulgarian who acted as my attendant, and whose horse had been killed, getting tired, I suppose, of dragging my things after me, had either sold them or thrown them away. The former is the more likely, as I never again saw either him, or my revolver, or my field-glass, or my other belongings. I most regretted the revolver, as it was one of the few things that I had been able to secure out of the

effects of my brother, who had been killed at Plevna.

After I had wandered about a little on the heights between the fires, in search of my Bulgarian, I went, tired and hungry, to Skobeleff's cottage. He was not there. I strolled about for a time, and then went again to him. Still he was not there. I will wait for him, at any rate,' thought I, 'for there is nothing to eat anywhere else.' 'He must soon come,' said the Cossack; 'his supper is waiting for him.'

At last I hear Skobeleff's step by the fence. In the darkness he knocked against the Cossack, and being out of temper (owing, I suppose, to the occurrences of the day) gave him a violent blow, which felled him to the ground. 'Why do you come running between my legs, you clumsy brute? What!' as his eyes fell on me, 'is there somebody else there? Oh, it is you, Vassily Vassilievitch! Well, forgive me, old fellow: embrace me, and don't be angry. Come, V. V., let us have a chat over our supper. And you, boy,' to the Cossack, 'bring us a bottle of champagne.'

Skobeleff was no tippler, and I never saw him the worse for drink, but he was very fond of champagne. In Plevna he assured us, as I well remember, that the bottles we were then drinking

were the last, and that he would not drag a single bottle with him over the mountains; but this was evidently only a stratagem of war, for now there was another bottle after all, and to-morrow there will probably be yet another if we give the Turks a good beating. My comrade, however, was a little out of humour: on the one hand, because he was haunted by the thought that he had not checked the Turks, and that he would be accused of purposely causing Mirski to fail; and, on the other hand, apparently, because I had been an involuntary spectator of his assault upon the Cossack. Our talk turned again on the folly of attacking with an insufficient force, &c.

I did not know where I should pass the night, when by accident I came upon a cottage which was occupied by Skobeleff's orderlies. I found a bright fire on the hearth, before which we laid ourselves down, without any ceremony, and slept soundly. They were young fellows, by no means fashionable, and not to be compared, as far as appearance went, with the dandies of Gourko's staff; but, to make up for that, they were brave and gallant men, who had stood many a shower of bullets.

The next morning, before daybreak, I went to the advanced guard. The weather was misty. The

bivouac-fires began to die out. Skobeleff was in no hurry to begin the struggle; he was perhaps waiting for Dukmassoff and Radetski's orders. It was already bright daylight when I ascended one of the neighbouring heights with Charanoff, who had been told off to observe the enemy's movements; every quarter of an hour I wrotere ports for him to Skobeleff on what we saw in front of us. The mist began to clear, but the mountains were still half-shrouded, and the Shipka was not visible at all. Now, as also during the whole night, single shots, at longer or shorter intervals, were heard from the valley and from the Shipka. As on the previous day, the Tcherkesses formed a chain round the village; the guns were silent. Both sides were evidently in a state of expectation, and preparing for the coming battle.

Presently, on the farther side of Shenovo, where Mirski lay, the firing began to grow sharper. On our side everything was quiet. We had a good laugh with Charanoff over our fears of being cut off by the Tcherkesses. There were three or four of us. We had ventured out a long way in front; the mist had not quite cleared away, when we saw ten or twelve dark figures, who approached us from the Shenovo side, stood still, looked round, and then strode off in a direction which would soon

place them between us and our friends. We were already preparing to retreat, in order not to be cut off from the main body, when the mist lifted and we saw—some large dogs, which were seeking the remains of the soldiers' meals.

It was as well that I had refrained from reporting to Skobeleff that a party of mounted Tcherkesses, &c.; he would have had a fine laugh at our expense. His laugh was loud and clear, with a curious gutteral sound—'Kha! kha! kha!'

On the further side the firing steadily increased. It was evident that another fierce struggle was beginning there; and I had scarcely had time to write to the general and suggest reconnoitring in the direction of Shenovo, when his orderly appeared in the distance. He sent us orders to retire, and at once began the battle.

Of our heavy field-pieces not a single one had arrived; the Bulgarian Militia put forth all their strength, but yet could not accomplish anything, though I think that, under Gourko, one or two guns would nevertheless have been brought up; he would have given orders to pull them up by the teeth. We had to confine ourselves again to our mountain guns. On the other hand, the whole of the cavalry had come down—i.e. a regiment of

Moscow dragoons, a regiment of St. Petersburg Uhlans, and two regiments of Don Cossacks. Of infantry there had come down one rifle brigade, the Bulgarian Militia, and the Uglitch, Kasan, Susdal, and Vladimir regiments of the 16th division. The two last-named regiments had suffered great losses at Plevna, and remained this time in the reserve.

The rifle brigade and the Bulgarian Militia advanced first, in order to fall on the right flank of the enemy. A terrible fusilade began.

Dukmassoff also appeared soon after with a cheery smile but a badly damaged face. He had had a fall on the way and had knocked his face against a tree. 'Radetski approves of all that I have done,' said Skobeleff to me with an air of satisfaction, showing me a letter he had just received.

Here too came an orderly from General Mirski with the news that he had fought a severe battle, and that he had taken the village of Shipka, but that no one was supporting him. I was particularly astonished at the news of the taking of the village of Shipka, which was evidently added to improve the story; for one of Skobeleff's orderlies had been there that very morning with a sotnia of Cossacks, and had not found a soul. I drew Skobeleff's attention to this point. 'Ah, Vassily Vassilievitch,' said he, 'that is it, of course; but,

nevertheless, I am bound to accept the statement when I have it in writing from one of the generals of H.M. the Czar.' The cavalry were commissioned to turn the enemy's position, and cut off his communication with Kasanlyk.

* * *

From the left flank, which had opened the attack, a number of wounded were moving to the rear. Soon, however, it was evident that the others also were beginning to retire. I could not believe my eyes. Hundreds of soldiers are forced back! they turn, they flee—the whole detachment begins to waver—it is no longer possible to doubt it; they are repulsed! 'Michael Dmitrievitch,' said I to Skobeleff, 'our men are utterly routed.' 'That does sometimes happen,' he answered with a strangely playful smile. He at once called Paniutin with the Uglitch Regiment. 'Advance, in God's name!' he commanded. Paniutin answered, 'Very good, sir,' took off his cap, crossed himself (the whole regiment following his example), and did not wait to have the order repeated. 'His fingers have been itching for a long time,' said Skobeleff to me; 'and if Paniutin is beaten back, I will lead the men into action myself.'

I have taken part in many battles, but I must

confess that I had never seen a fight carried on with such precision. 'Jews to the front!' commanded Skobeleff (which meant: 'Music here!' because almost all the musicians were of the Jewish race). To the sound of the music, with colours flying, and with a step as regular as on the parade ground, one battalion of the Uglitch Regiment followed another, cheerfully responding to Skobeleff's greeting. This Valley of Roses might have been taken for the Field of Mars at St. Petersburg on a parade day. To the sound of the marches played by the regimental band, the troops advanced to the attack, while the reserves played the national hymn and an evening prayer resembling a chorale, just as if it had been some military festival! I remember that one battalion of the Vladimir Regiment was marching with a furled banner. I rode up to the aide-de-camp and begged him, in the general's name, to unfurl it.

Skobeleff afterwards said that he had been 'clever' that day because he had kept out of the fire; but that was one of his peculiar expressions, for, as a matter of fact, shells and bullets fell in showers upon us. The Turks directed their projectiles chiefly at the reserves and at our group. About five shells fell so close to Skobeleff that he could not refrain from turning

impatiently upon the Cossacks who had collected together near us with, 'Why the devil don't you separate? You will all be killed!'

The indefatigable Count Keller had ridden off to deliver some order or other, and I in consequence had to write down some of Skobeleff's orders. I remember that he directed me to alter the concluding sentence of an order addressed to the commander of the cavalry—a sentence in which he was told to advance boldly. 'He is an old general; I cannot write to him like that,' said Skobeleff. I had been moved to add that sentence by the fact that we had seen how one of the cavalry regiments, in the midst of which a shell fell. turned aside and moved on at a slower pace. I further remember that in an order to General Mirski I forgot to put down the date and hour, at which my friend was very angry. Fortunately Count Keller came up at this moment. 'Why are you never here when you are wanted!' cried Skobeleff. 'Write quick.' I was glad to have got off so well, and began to draw energetically, which was much more to my taste than writing.

When Skobeleff sent X. to Paniutin with the order to begin the assault, I, who was standing by Skobeleff, added, 'And tell him to draw the

reserves closer to him.' Skobeleff turned upon me again. 'I cannot possibly teach him his business just when he is going into action,' he said. But I thought to myself, Why not? Later, about a year afterwards, I met Captain K. of the Rifles, and asked him why they had been driven back. He answered me exactly in the following words: '*Because the reserves were too far off.* The soldiers went into action well, but met with strong resistance, and, looking round, missed their supports and began to waver.'

It is worth noticing that this mistake is often repeated, and can naturally only be attributed to the reluctance of commanders to expose their reserves to a heavy fire. On the part of Skobeleff, who, when the state of affairs needed it, never spared his men, it was simply inadvertence.

Paniutin went boldly at the enemy: he approached the Turkish trenches in close order, without firing, merely from time to time ordering his men to lie down. 'Just look at Paniutin!' I said to Skobeleff; 'I thought he was better at talking than acting, and now he proves himself a regular hero.'

'Let me tell you,' returned Skobeleff, taking his field-glass for a moment from his eyes, 'that Paniutin is a tempestuous creature.'

I can still distinctly see Skobeleff as he stood that day in the snow, in his open overcoat, following the course of the battle attentively with his field-glass. From time to time, without changing his position, he gives this or that order, or, if the shot whistle too sharply round him, sends the Cossacks with their horses to the devil; his general's *guidon* attracts the particular attention of the enemy, and the *guidon* also is sent to the devil.

I made a little sketch of the general position of the troops engaged on either side, and remember that while I was drawing a fragment of a shell rolled close up to the chair on which I sat.

In front of us, like a blue line, stretched the oaks of the village of Shenovo, from which the smoke of the cannon and musketry fire rose continually. On the left heavy white clouds concealed the Shipka; but the booming of guns and the crackling of muskets were to be heard from that quarter also. It was evident that Radetski too had made up his mind to attack.

The Kasan Regiment hastened to the support of the Uglitch: they had to attack the Turks in the centre, to the left of Paniutin. 'Go on, brothers, in God's name, and make no prisoners!' called Skobeleff to them. 'We'll do our best, your Excellency,' was the reply.

'Make no prisoners' meant, in plain language, 'Cut everybody down without mercy.' I reminded Skobeleff of those words the next day. 'Did I really say that?' he asked. The Uglitch and Kasan regiments drove the Turks completely from their positions. It is common enough, in a picture of a battle, to see the commanding officer lead a regiment with the colours in his hand: this Paniutin actually did, and it was mainly through his efforts that the battle was ultimately decided in our favour.

It is worthy of notice that this same Uglitch Regiment, on the day of the assault—on August 30—during the second attack on Plevna, established itself so firmly in the vineyards that it could not be induced to leave them. To such a degree does the bravery of the soldiers depend on the bravery of their leaders.

The battle was evidently won. Skobeleff now seemed less nervous; he laughed and joked. When General Stoletoff came up to him, I whispered to Skobeleff that he ought now to make friends with him; and although the elderly Stoletoff at first laughingly refused to conclude a treaty of peace, they nevertheless finally embraced each other. Stoletoff had come up to Skobeleff while the fusilade was still going on, and had said

something to him, upon which the latter had answered impatiently: 'Leave me alone!' 'What reason had you for being so short with him?' I asked Skobeleff afterwards 'He was not in his right place,' answered Skobeleff; 'when his troops are attacking, his place is with them and not with me. I do not like that kind of thing.' On that day, however, my friend N. D. fared the worst. On his making some remark, Skobeleff said to him, 'Vassily Ivanovitch, please go away.' N. D. stepped back a little. 'No—quite away, quite.'

About two o'clock a Turkish officer who had been taken prisoner was brought in. He told us that all was lost on their side—that their whole force was in flight. This officer rode afterwards for several days in Skobeleff's suite, evidently much pleased at his treatment.

About three o'clock a Cossack comes galloping up to Skobeleff—'Your Excellency, the Turks have hoisted the white flag.' Skobeleff and all of us mounted our horses and rode at full speed towards Shenovo. The nearer we got to the village the greater was the number of the dead we saw; the Turkish batteries were full of dead. The Turks had evidently remained to the last moment at their posts, and our soldiers had carried out Skobeleff's

order to the letter—none had escaped with their lives. The Turkish trenches were likewise filled with bodies. It was strange that so very many dead were found in the trenches. The Turks had evidently been too eager, and had awaited our men *in front* of their fortifications.

When we had ridden through a portion of Shenovo we turned to the left towards the hills. N. D. was very nearly caught on a tree and thrown out of his saddle; but he was in the best of spirits in spite of it. A talented author, in war he was an indefatigable reporter, and contrived to be present at everything that was going on. Though he was rather stout and solid in person, he rode quite a small mountain horse, which, according to him, possessed some peculiar qualities, one of them, and certainly not the last in importance, being the power to carry a man of his figure.

Troops of prisoners met us. Skobeleff had been informed that the cavalry had taken prisoners six thousand Turks, who were retiring towards Kasanlyk. We also met troops of Russian soldiers, whose commander received a sharp reproof for their irregular marching.

We rode about looking for the Turkish commander-in-chief with the white flag. On the way we saw Paniutin, who had shouted himself quite

hoarse, but nevertheless was making even more noise than usual; in fact every one, from the highest rank to the lowest, was hoarse that day as if by command.

All about us lay vast numbers of dead bodies and of abandoned weapons. I was riding by Skobeleff, and I said to him: 'Do you remember how you doubted whether you were doing right in waiting to collect your forces? Now you see what you have accomplished—what a brilliant victory you have won. And yet, for all that, I must say that you were rather nervous.' 'Do you think so?' 'Certainly, although less than usual.'

At last a colonel of rifles came with the sword of the Turkish commander-in-chief. 'Where is he himself?' 'There, by that large mound.' This mound was occupied from top to bottom by Turkish soldiers, who sat there in a state of apathy after throwing away their arms and ammunition. Down below there was a little wooden barrack, at the door of which stood, with a large suite, a Turkish general, not yet old, with brown hair tinged with grey and a serious expression. It was the Turkish commander-in-chief, Vessel Pasha. Skobeleff ordered them to come up to him. With a gloomy countenance Vessel Pasha approached, followed by other pashas and thirty or forty

officers of different ranks. Skobeleff tried to comfort him with a few kindly words about the bravery of his soldiers; but he listened with a sad face, and did not say a word. The whole suite looked on with equal gloominess.

'Vassily Vassilievitch, ride quickly to General Tomilofski,' said Skobeleff to me in a low voice, and tell him to disarm the prisoners at once, without delay. I have intelligence that Suleiman Pasha is hastening up from Philippopolis, and I am afraid lest the Turks, on the first news of it, might snatch up their arms again.' I conveyed the order, with the explanation given by Skobeleff, and on my way back hastened to the top of the great mound to take the white flag as a remembrance; it was a large piece of striped cotton-silk. I gave it to the Cossack X. to take care of, but he lost it. The Turks looked on with some apprehension while I took away the white flag: they probably thought that when it was gone they would all be cut down.

'Will the Shipka surrender?' Skobeleff asked of Vessel Pasha. 'I do not know.' 'What! You do not know?—you, who are the commander-in-chief?' 'Yes, I am commander-in-chief, but I do not know whether they will obey my orders.' 'If that is the case, the Shipka shall be attacked at

once,' cried Skobeleff, and ordered the Susdal and Vladimir Regiments to move forward in the direction of the high road which led to the pass.

Hereupon there was some stir among the Turkish officers; a few words were exchanged in Turkish, and then Vessel Pasha turned to Skobeleff, saying: 'Wait, wait; I will send the chief of my staff over there.' A Turkish colonel was sent off on this mission, accompanied by General Stoletoff from our side. Meantime, however, the brave Charanoff had already undertaken to inform General Radetski of the results of the battle.

Skobeleff was seriously afraid that the Turkish commander would perhaps offer resistance, especially as Bulgarians were bringing intelligence from all sides of a movement of Suleiman Pasha in this direction; which proved later to be correct, though not exactly in the way we imagined. Suleiman did, in fact, move from Philippopolis; but in so doing he was not taking the offensive, but was retreating before Gourko's detachment.

To say the truth, we scarcely regarded Skobeleff's threat to attack the Shipka as serious, nor, probably, did Skobeleff himself. The Turks must have been very much depressed if they really believed it. Our reserve brigade, consisting of two regiments, was not a force which could inspire

much respect in an attack on such fortified and snow-covered points, at a height of 6,000 feet.

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Skobeleff had sent out his orderlies on various missions, and some of them remained rather a long time away, so that I again had to convey several of his orders. When we rode towards the hills, Vessel Pasha began to move also, with his large suite, behind our brigade and behind us. At this moment there were with Skobeleff only a Cossack with the general's standard, N. D., and my insignificant self; and the Turkish officers were not a little puzzled at seeing the Russian hero, before whom they had laid down their arms, with such a miserable suite. They could scarcely believe that this was really the 'famous white general'; at least the chief of the staff questioned me about Skobeleff's rank and distinctions. It seemed to astonish him not a little that Skobeleff was only lieutenant-general, and not full general. I remember that this officer, when I delivered some order of Skobeleff's to him, looked at my half-military, half-civil costume, and turned to me with the words, 'May I ask who you are?' 'I am the general's secretary,' I replied. I was then wearing a large Cossack cap, a short Rou-

manian fur coat with long hair; my feet were encased in huge boots; a sword hung over my shoulder. The officer's Cross of the Order of St. George was the only thing which a little counterbalanced the excessive picturesqueness of this costume.

While we awaited the answer of the commander of the Shipka the troops moved on to the hills to the sound of music, and were there drawn up. Skobeleff rode through the ranks, and spoke to the soldiers in the tone of a friend rather than of a commanding officer. 'Now, you see, brothers, I always told you to obey your superiors. To-day you carried out your orders excellently, and have done your work well; let it be so in the future.'

The Shipka surrendered, but the answer arrived late, and we rode away without waiting for it. On the way a comical sight presented itself. Dukmassoff, who had disappeared without leaving any traces some time before, was leading two large grey Turkish horses belonging to the artillery across the road. When he caught sight of Skobeleff he was embarrassed, and pulled the horses with all his might; but they, as if to spite him, did not obey. Skobeleff turned his eyes aside. We laughed.

The general took possession of Vessel Pasha's little wooden hut. I rode to Imetli for my night's

lodging, with a commission from him to take a greeting to the wounded commander of the first brigade of his division, General X. The command of the brigade had been taken over temporarily by Paniutin. Count T. also was wounded in the hand; he filled the post of colleague to Stoletoff, who commanded the Bulgarian Militia. All our troops had suffered severe loss. Paniutin lost out of his regiment, if I am not mistaken, about 350 men. The ranks of the Bulgarians, too, had been greatly thinned by the enemy. The Rifles, who had fought very bravely, lost still more. With regard to the Rifles, it must be observed that they form separate battalions and advance at the beginning of the battle, and consequently are at the front at the time of attack. Their losses are therefore always greater than those of other portions of the troops. This proportionately large loss of the Rifles in Gourko's Guards roused the Emperor's displeasure. It was decided to spare the Rifles more, i.e. to let them march to the front at the beginning of the battle, but only take part in the actual attack in case of necessity; though this is surely impracticable. The moment of attack is seldom decided exactly beforehand, but each commander generally chooses the proper moment, which is partly determined by the position of the enemy,

and partly by the temper of his own troops. To withdraw the troops stationed in front at the very moment when they are getting keen is likely to have a very bad effect.

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On the way to Imetli I saw in one place some soldiers busy with a big Turk. They were turning his pockets inside out and tearing out the lining of his coat. Now they took something up, and now threw it down again on the ground. The Turk was not yet dead: muffled sounds broke from his throat. What a strong Turk! If he had had strength, how he would have paid out the soldiers!

The battery on the nearer flank of the enemy is literally filled with bodies. My horse shies at the awful sight. In the trenches round the battery Russians and Turks lie mingled together, the number of our men being considerable. One body attracted my attention; the face, which was young, showed him to have been what one calls a raw youth. He was a volunteer. The body lay apart from the rest, the arms and feet stretched out, the eyes open. His boots—that most important article of clothing in a campaign—had been taken off, his pockets turned out, and a large number of letters

lay about—the enemies who robbed him were not likely to care for these letters. But they had left him also the golden cross round his neck. I took up the letters and glanced at them to discover the name of the fallen youth. He was the son of a noble family in the south of Russia. All the tenderness of a mother was expressed in these letters: she blessed him over and over again, besought him to spare himself, told him of packages sent off with his favourite fruit-syrup, &c.

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The figure of a soldier often appeared near me. He went to the bodies of the officers one after another, bent down, looked at the dead man's face, and went on. I followed him with my eyes. At last he bends down over a body and arranges and cleans the dress, puts the head straight, folds the hands on the breast and kisses them.

It was an officer's servant, who had found his dead master; for the last time he arranged his dress.

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Late in the evening I entered the cottage where our young fellows were quartered; it was full of harness. The practical Dukmassoff had chosen out

a complete team of three from among the horses taken from the Turks, and was now endeavouring to procure the necessary harness. 'Where are you going to take that?' 'Home to the Don,' was his answer. I bought a small horse from a Turk, because mine, after the toils of the last two days, was not up to his work. Besides that, I got a complete Turkish equipment; it was to have a place in my pictures.

I forgot to mention that soon after Vessel-Pasha had surrendered Skobeleff rode to Sviatopolk-Mirski, who had command of the other division. I rode with him, and saw that although the generals embraced and kissed each other there was constraint between them. Skobeleff was evidently not pleased with the little comedy acted by Mirski on receiving him. We found the general sitting in the open air at a table, which was, I am sure, put there to give a touch of solemnity to the reception, as if he had been about to hold a trial.

They told us there that the division had lost on the first day 2,500 men, and on the second day, as nothing was to be seen of Skobeleff, they were about to retreat (!) But just then music was heard, followed by loud cheering, musketry fire, and the thundering of cannon. It was Skobeleff's attacking column. So, although Mirski had to endure

the first onset of the Turks and experienced a hard fight, his fate was evidently decided by Skobeleff.

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On the following morning I came to Shenovo. They told me Skobeleff was looking for me. I found him on horseback, just about to inspect the troops. We rode slowly apart. The general observed that he had a favour to ask of me, and I must promise him first to grant it. 'With pleasure.' 'The matter is this,' he began; 'gossip and slander are beginning. It is said that I purposely allowed the Turks to almost overwhelm Mirski, purposely did not give help the first day in order to appear as a deliverer the second. Mirski is intriguing. He is simply a thief; for, do you know what he did? He went into my hut when I was away, demanded from my servant, Kurkofsky, Vessel Pasha's sword, and carried it off to give it up to Radetski. Is not that stealing?—for the pasha surrendered and gave up his sword to me. Mirski is older than I am, but only in years, not in rank; we are both commanders with equal rights, both under Radetski, not one under the other. You know, Vassily Vassilievitch, what happened: you remember that I made every effort

to come to his assistance, but I could not imperil the success of the expedition to procure laurels for Mirski. Ride to headquarters, and tell his Imperial Highness the facts of the matter.' 'This commission is, I confess, very disagreeable to me,' I answered. 'I was always very cautious in my behaviour at headquarters; and although the Grand Duke was always friendly to me, he might say the matter was no concern of mine.' 'Do not refuse my request,' said Skobeleff; 'do it for me: you promised.' 'Very well,' I assented, 'I will ride off.' I advised that meanwhile Tchaikofski, the officer from headquarters who was with Skobeleff, should be sent with the official announcement. I knew he was an honest fellow incapable of slander.

During this conversation we had left the village. The troops were drawn up with the left flank towards Mount St. Nicholas, and the front towards Shenovo. Suddenly Skobeleff drove his spurs into his horse's flanks and dashed along at full gallop, swinging his cap high in the air and calling out to the soldiers, 'In the name of our country, in the name of the Emperor, I thank you, brothers.' I observed that there were tears in his eyes. The enthusiasm of the soldiers is difficult to describe. Caps flew into the air; they cheered as if they would never stop. Skobeleff said to me

later that he had very nearly made a *faux pas*. As he uttered the words 'In the name of our country,' it fortunately occurred to him to add, 'in the name of the Emperor'; otherwise he might have been accused of Nihilism.

Soon after I rode through the mountains to Selvi. I was given a number of telegrams which I was to despatch to Russia to relatives of the senders. I proposed to Vessel Pasha to send a telegram to Constantinople, and the chief of his staff gave me a piece of paper on which he had written in French, 'After many bloody struggles to save the army, I have surrendered with the pashas and the whole army.—VESSEL.'

N. D. started with me; he wanted to make observations on the Shipka in order to be able to send his newspaper as complete a report as possible of the course of affairs. I have seldom laughed as much as I did then. N. D. did not appear on his own horse, which was in need of rest, but on a tall thin Cossack horse from the Don, which Dukmassoff had placed at his disposal. 'Where on earth did you get that animal from?' 'I want to try it: Dukmassoff wants to sell it; it is a real Don horse,' N. D. answered from his lofty perch. At the first step which the reputed Don horse took his character was gone;

SKOBELEFF AFTER THE BATTLE OF SHENOVA.

for when N. D. urged him to greater speed he began to kick; and the further we went the worse it got. I laughed until I cried, but N. D., in a rage, lashed his horse and exclaimed, 'Just wait; I will teach you, I will do for you. What a rascal that Dukmassoff is! He would sell me this horse, would he? We shall see.' His generally good-natured face was quite disfigured by his vexation. His steed began to turn round under his lashes; with head down, it turned about, moved its tail up and down, and kicked.

In the village of Shipka, everything was destroyed except the church; not one house remained whole. We rode along the road up the hill. The deserted cannon stood on the Turkish batteries. The Turks were seeking out the most valuable of their possessions and putting them into their knapsacks, preparing to begin their toilsome march into captivity. At the highest trench, which was strongly fortified, I was startled by the terrible number of Russian bodies. None lay by the breastwork; which proves, contrary to the official report, that our men did not storm the Turkish fortifications themselves, but only advanced up to the broad ditch which had been made some little distance from the entrenchment, and there planted themselves.

From thence I sent my horse on to the road again, but began myself to climb up the rock at the same spot where in September Suleiman Pasha undertook his fierce attack on the Shipka. The whole path was now thickly strewn with bodies. The stench was unbearable, for the snow scarcely covered the scene of horror. Progress was here so difficult that I admired the bravery of the Turks, who, as they climbed the steep ascent, were obliged to cling to the remains of bushes and regularly crawl through the ranks of the dead. I did not want to turn back, but I could not venture to go on; creeping over the bodies on all fours was hard enough, and there was such an odour that I felt quite ill. Fortunately a soldier appeared at the top of the rock.

'Brother,' I called with a voice of despair, 'help me.' He came down, gave me his hand, and pulled me up to the rock, where I breathed freely.

In N.'s mud-hut, with which I was already acquainted, I found General Molski, with whom I shared a bottle of champagne to celebrate the victory. N. was not there, he had to take over muskets, guns, and flags from the Turks.

In the evening I went into the mud-hut occupied by General Petrushefski, also an old Turkestan acquaintance. I found with him Brigadier-General

Biskupski, the chief of Radetski's staff, Generals Dmitrofoski and S., the latter an officer on the general staff, who was with Mirski during our flanking movement. The conversation was very lively. Although they were evidently cautious in my presence, I found that Skobeleff was severely criticized there for his victory over Vessel Pasha, although those present were his friends. S., who was with Mirski, was particularly vexed at Skobeleff, probably because he was his particular friend. I have often observed that after a battle, when the time comes for rewards, the best friends fall foul of each other. Skobeleff, besides, had incurred the censure of his friends for a long time because he had outstripped them. I took up Skobeleff's defence.

'Do you think that our attack led to nothing?' Dmitrofski asked me. 'I do not think that. Your attack must have greatly alarmed the Turks; to be attacked on three sides must have driven them to despair. I believe that each did his duty.'

I had not time to visit General Radetski, and drove in a sleigh, which had been put at my disposal most kindly by Biskupski, to Gabrovo. A drive to Selvi would have been fruitless, because the commander-in-chief had moved his headquarters to Gabrovo. He was expected there that very morning. As soon as the Grand Duke arrived

I went to him. Skalon and Skobeleff's father met me. 'You come from the detachment, from Misha!' they called out as they saw me, and took me to the Grand Duke. I related what I knew of the battle in the most conscientious manner. In order to discover what impression my incomplete narrative produced, I added that Skobeleff was blamed because he had not made the attack a day earlier; to attack with half our strength would, however, have been a great risk, apart from the fact that, even in the event of success, the greater part of the enemy's troops would have retreated and escaped, as we had no cavalry which could hold them.

'That is certainly true,' replied the Grand Duke.

I then told the elder Skobeleff that I had come to the Grand Duke at his son's request. 'You ought to have told the Grand Duke how many guns and colours have been taken; you only told him how they attacked to the sound of music.' 'I narrated the affair as I understood it; the Grand Duke will hear about the guns, and that sort of thing, which is so dear to you, without my assistance.'

I learnt later, in the course of conversation with Skalon, that the immediate conclusion of peace was contemplated. 'Impossible!' I said. 'I

will tell the Grand Duke at once that it is impossible. Was it worth while to shed so much blood?' 'Well, then, go and tell him.'

I went again to the commander-in-chief, with whom Prince Tcherkaski was sitting. 'Your Imperial Highness, I have a few words to say.' 'Certainly,' replied the Grand Duke. Tcherkaski withdrew.

'Is it true that you are about to conclude peace?'

'Not I, my friend; but St. Petersburg intends.'

'Evade the order somehow.'

'It is impossible. If the order is given I make peace.'

'It is not possible! In that case the war ought not to have been begun.'

'What is to be done? I will do what I can; but I am afraid they will not ask me at all.'

'Cut the telegraph wires: commission me: I will interrupt the communication. A peace which is not concluded in Constantinople is not to be thought of; at least it should be a peace in Adrianople.' Skalon, who had come in with me, supported me.

'I will go as far as possible, be assured.' With these words the Grand Duke dismissed me.

The Grand Duke ordered his horse, to go and

visit the wounded officers in the hospital. As the hospital was quite close and the street was covered with ice, I persuaded him to go on foot; the people greeted him enthusiastically.

It must be confessed that the Grand Duke, in spite of numerous defeats and mistakes, was very popular. Besides, it was known in the army that he had to contend not only with the Turks, but also with various private interests.

I told him that I had ordered a number of Turks who had made a disturbance to be taken out of the hospital. He gave his approval. He talked for a long time with Kuropatkin and Laskofsky in the hospital. The following day he had to cross the mountains to inspect Radetski's, Skobeleff's, and Mirski's troops.

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I passed the night with my brother, who was detained in Gabrovo by a wound in the foot, and then I started on my way back to Skobeleff.

On the Shipka there was such a snowstorm as it would be difficult to imagine: whirling snowdrifts threw us down and obliterated the paths. Petrushefski and Biskupski begged me to stay the night with them; but I would not listen to them, drank my tea, and continued on my way—a decision

which, to confess the truth, I afterwards regretted, for the snowstorm was so violent that it was impossible not only to ride but even to walk. The wind was so strong and the road so slippery that I fell down continually. My Cossack also fell several times, and, worst of all, broke my paint-box in doing so. We descended the whole night, and early in the morning I reached Shenovo.

Count Keller, whom I met later, told me of an amusing incident concerning General Mirski. The story was only credible because it came from the lips of such a modest and brave officer. General Radetski, who was in command of an army corps, and had the chief direction of the whole Shipka army, was about to come down from the pass. Count Keller sent out a Cossack with orders to bring him word the moment the general left the mountains, in order that a guard of honour might be drawn up in proper time. When Radetski arrived, Count Keller, who received him with the others, saw that the men who formed the guard of honour did not belong to Skobeleff's division, which was the nearer one, but to Mirski's, which was the more distant; he also saw the Cossack whom he had sent standing by the guard of honour. 'Why,' he called out to him, 'did you not summon our guard of honour, which was in

readiness?' 'His Excellency did not give the order,' he answered. It turned out that General Mirski had met the Cossack and learnt from him what he was sent to do. He thereupon detained him, and in the mean time ordered a guard of honour of his own men to be drawn up.

I found Skobeleff busy with preparations for the reception of the commander-in-chief. He told me, among other things, that he had told Radetski how General Mirski got possession of Vessel Pasha's sword, and that Radetski had observed: 'Do let that alone. How can you care about such trifles?'

It gave me great amusement to watch Skobeleff's preparations for the reception of the Grand Duke, and to see how fearful he was of committing some mistake. He had no idea of what military etiquette required in the matter of sentries and parades. Believing that the Grand Duke would make the troops march past in line, he racked his brains as to how he should behave, how he should give his orders, where he should stand, &c. His only deliverer was his orderly, Homitchefski, an officer belonging to a regiment of the Yang Guards. 'Tell me quicker: where must the sappers stand?' 'At the head, your Excellency.' 'Well, then, how have I got to give the word of command?' 'Your Excellency will then say,' &c. When I saw

with what seriousness he allowed himself to be instructed how to command, where to stand, &c., I could not help laughing aloud. 'What are you laughing at, Vassily Vassilievitch?' Skobeleff asked, like an injured child. 'How can I help laughing? A general, before whom the Turks have laid down their arms, is learning a set of words like a schoolboy!'

Several times Skobeleff took me aside and asked, 'Vassily Vassilievitch, tell me; did the Grand Duke listen to your account attentively? How did he answer you?' and so on.

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High up on the mountain a long line of dots became visible coming towards us; it was the Grand Duke with his suite. Skobeleff's perplexity became more and more evident; he looked quite miserable. I observed that he always had a very troubled expression when he had to receive people of high rank. Such a situation was evidently very disagreeable to him, because he was uncertain what would be said to him and how he would be received.

The Grand Duke arrived at the foot of the mountain, where General Radetski awaited him. When he was still at some distance, the Grand

Duke swung his cap in the air and called out, 'Fedor Fedorovitch, hurrah!' He embraced, kissed and congratulated Radetski on his promotion to the rank of general of infantry, and decorated him with the Cross of St. George of the second class. Then the Grand Duke rode up to Skobeleff, gave him his shoulder to kiss, and—that was all. I looked at Michael Dmitrievitch. It is painful to me even now to recall the miserable, I might say helpless, expression in his face; sadly he rode behind the Grand Duke and gave confusedly the necessary orders. I was sorry for him, and I was ready to say to the Grand Duke: 'Look at Skobeleff. Either he has failed, or you do not understand what it costs a man like him to be passed over before everybody. At least have some pity for him; say aloud that he has done good service.' The soldiers also seemed to feel the painful situation, for they received the Grand Duke with such a small show of enthusiasm, shouted hurrah so feebly and unwillingly, that the Grand Duke himself must have noticed the coldness of his welcome. I do not know whether he understood the situation. He rode through the lines and presently took his departure.

Skobeleff accompanied him, spoke some time with him, and then seemed more tranquil.

Skobeleff defeated and took prisoner a Turkish

army. His immediate superior received for this act the Order of St. George—the highest military distinction; his colleague, the commander of the second detachment, although his attack was not a very successful one, received the same order; but Skobeleff himself did not receive this distinction, because he was too young for the second class. Promotion was denied him for the same reason. Much later he was given, in common with many others, a *sword for bravery*; but, as he already possessed two such weapons, he had to choose between keeping the sword in its case, or wearing all three swords on solemn occasions, which would have been equally uncomfortable and unusual.

The Grand Duke expressed displeasure at several matters; among others, that a large number of our dead belonging to Mirski's force had not yet been buried.

The commander-in-chief rode to Kasanlyk, whither headquarters were transferred. I rode to Skobeleff, with whom I was to dine. His father was there; also General Strukoff and some one else. When I was leaving him in the evening I observed that he had not received the Grand Duke in a manner worthy of him. That annoyed him. 'What do you expect me to do? I shall not make the soldiers artificially enthusiastic, and

order them to throw their caps in the air.[1] He was coldly received because they did not want to receive him warmly. Do you think I am a ninny? Am I to salute Radetski with cheers? He has the honour: very well; but he might have found a kind word for me—he did not even thank me.'

[1] This generally takes place on a signal given by one of the suite of the commanding officer.

SKOBELEFF.

I REMEMBER as if it had been yesterday the occasion on which I first made acquaintance with Skobeleff in Central Asia in the year 1870. It was at Tashkend, in the only inn of the town. A Frenchman, named Girardé, who was tutor to the children of the governor, General Kaufmann, pointed out to me a young Hussar officer of striking appearance, and begged leave to introduce 'his former pupil, Skobeleff.' I shook the young man's hand; he replied with a courteous bow, and with some rather extravagant expressions of his esteem for me and his happiness in making my acquaintance. I felt myself immediately drawn towards the young man (he was a year younger than myself); but I must confess that I did not show very much warmth in talking to him, on account of a very unpleasant affair in which he had lately been concerned. He had been exploring the frontiers of Bokhara, and on his return

made a report upon the suppression of brigandage in those parts—forty brigands killed, and so on, though, as afterwards appeared, there were no brigands at all. This gave rise to a grave scandal. The governor of the province, General Kaufmann, sent for Skobeleff, and, in the presence of a number of officers, rebuked him in a loud voice and in strong terms: 'You have told lies, and covered yourself with disgrace.' Skobeleff was challenged by two of his brother officers, wounded one of them, and had to leave Turkestan.

Ten years later, the young lieutenant had risen to the rank of general, and had a command-in-chief in the war against the Turkomans. It must be allowed that he showed himself quite worthy of his advancement; but in 1873, during the campaign of Khiva, he committed another error, which, though not so gross as that of 1870, was still serious enough: contrary to the orders of his superior officer, he led his men to the assault of Khiva at the very moment when a deputation was starting in order to surrender the town and to make complete submission to the Russian commander.

It was in this campaign, however, that Skobeleff made his reputation, and distinguished himself by an act of chivalrous daring. Of the three divisions which had been sent against Khiva,

one, the Caucasian division, commanded by General Markosoff, was unable to reach its destination; in attempting to advance too rapidly, the men exhausted their strength and rode their horses to death, and when they were only fifty miles from Khiva they were obliged to turn back. This piece of the road consequently had still to be explored, and a small expedition was to be sent out for the purpose. Skobeleff volunteered to explore it by himself. He disguised himself as a Turkoman, and, with only two guides, actually explored and mapped out the road, to within nine miles of the well where the Caucasian division had turned back, and where a strong body of Turkomans was now said to be encamped. I asked Skobeleff afterwards whether he had not met anybody on the way. 'Yes,' he replied; 'but, whenever I saw people on the road, I sent my two guides on in front; they would begin to talk about anything that came into their heads, principally about the Russians, and meantime I would ride quietly by. Of course we rode chiefly at night and in the twilight.' For this feat Skobeleff received the long-coveted St. George's Cross of the fourth class. General Kaufmann told me that as he handed Skobeleff this token of gallantry he added these words: 'In my opinion

you have now atoned for your former error; but you have not yet won my esteem.' Bitter!

But Skobeleff won General Kaufmann's esteem in the campaign against Khokand, which soon followed. When the rebellion broke out, he escorted the Russian embassy from Khokand to the frontier of Russia, and at the same time secured the safety of the Khan, and laid his plans so well that he accomplished his purpose without the loss of a single man. One false step, one shot fired by the fugitives, who were a mere handful of men, would have been enough to bring on a bloody struggle, in which the rebels, with their overpowering numbers, must have been victorious. In the war which followed, General Kaufmann annihilated the forces of Khokand at Mahram, and Skobeleff, as commander of the cavalry, was ubiquitous, and worked terrible havoc among the enemy, on one occasion repeating the stratagem by which Gideon the Israelite and Akbar the Great Mogul had won renown. When he heard that the enemy's cavalry were in the neighbourhood, he stole up to them at night with a picked body of Cossacks, threw himself upon them as they slept, with loud cries of 'Hurrah!' and put a great number to the sword. Skobeleff told me that they picked up 2,000 turbans on the field next day.

At the time of the Russo-Turkish war Skobeleff had already risen to the rank of major-general and won the St. George's Cross, and although when the war began his fame was lightly esteemed, and no command was given to him, yet his behaviour in the course of the war was such that at the end of it he was universally regarded as one of our first fighting generals, as the popular hero, and the bravest of the brave.

But at the beginning of the campaign, being tired of inactivity, he took it into his head to do an extremely silly thing, which might have had serious consequences. He persuaded his father, who was at that time in command of a division of Cossacks, that it was possible for his troops to swim across the Danube. The river was in flood at the time, and at least two miles wide. The elder Skobeleff, being a cautious and prudent man, called the regimental colonels together and asked them their opinion. My friend Colonel Kucharenko, commanding the Kuban regiment, gave his opinion first, with his usual stammer: 'It is imp-p-possible, quite imp-p-p-possible!' The brave Levis, commanding the Vladicaucasians, said it might perhaps be attempted, but that probably the greater part of the troops would be drowned. Then Skobeleff invited volunteers, and a few

officers and men actually offered themselves. But they all turned back; some gave up as soon as they found themselves out of their depth, others after swimming five or six hundred yards; none got farther than the real bank of the Danube, which rose out of the floods and formed a kind of island. Michael Skobeleff alone swam on, while his father stood on the shore and cried continually, 'Misha, turn back; you will be drowned; turn back, Misha!' But he would not turn, and swam on till he almost reached the further shore. He was picked up by a boat within a short distance of the land. His horse made the passage in safety; but the Cossacks, with their short, heavy horses, would have fared much worse, and would certainly have found a watery grave—though, indeed, Skobeleff's horse was not a remarkably good one, but only a very ordinary mare, and not a grey (his favourite colour), but a sorrel.

This was neither the first nor the least feat of the kind that Skobeleff performed. Not long before his death, when he was in command of an army corps, he ordered his cavalry to cross a river. The men had no heart for the business; the colonel declared they would all be drowned. Thereupon Skobeleff jumped upon the back of the nearest troop-horse, and, though the animal showed

great reluctance, compelled it to swim to the opposite shore and back again. 'You see, brothers, that it can be done,' said he to the regiment; 'now follow my lead.' And the regiment actually crossed the river and came back again without the loss of a single man. This river, however, was not two miles broad.

When the Russian troops were crossing the Danube, Skobeleff, who had not received any appointment, begged permission of General Dragomiroff to act as one of his orderly officers. He excited universal admiration by his fearlessness. Moving about under fire as calmly as if he were walking on the boulevards, he carried his orders always to the right quarter, inspired every one with fresh courage, and behaved like a fighting officer who knows his business. How strongly was he reprimanded afterwards by the commander-in-chief for meddling with matters that did not concern him!

In the second attack on Plevna Skobeleff was entrusted with a battalion—and what was the result? With this single battalion he actually saved our beaten troops: Prince Shahofskoi plainly states in his report that nothing but the gallant conduct of Skobeleff saved his corps from destruction. With a mere handful of men he advanced

right up to Plevna, forced the Turks, who had no idea that their assailants numbered only a few hundreds, to concentrate themselves, drew the whole force of the enemy's attack upon himself, and enabled our disordered regiments to retire in safety. My younger brother, who fell afterwards in the third assault upon Plevna, was with Skobeleff just at this time, and seeing the general's horse killed under him for the second time, dismounted and offered him his own. 'I won't take your horse,' said Skobeleff; 'he is not a grey.' But the storm of bullets and shells became so heavy, and the Turks were advancing in such force, that he was obliged to accept my brother's horse after all, and though it was a sorrel it carried him out of the fire as well as his own grey could have done.

At the battle of Lovisha, Skobeleff for the first time commanded a division, which numbered 20,000 men. He was chief of the staff to General Prince Imeritinski, who put the conduct of affairs entirely into his hands, and was a spectator of the battle from a hill at some distance. After the capture of the forts, which assuredly no other Russian general would have taken, Prince Imeritinski in his report called Skobeleff the hero of the day, as indeed he was.

There is no doubt whatever that Skobeleff

might have taken Plevna on August 30. But what could he do? When, with the scanty forces of the left wing, he had, after three days' continuous fighting, taken the Turkish redoubt which commanded the town, and begged for reinforcements, the authorities sent him, out of spite probably, a regiment which had been beaten and demoralised the day before. Osman Pasha threw himself upon 'the white general' with overwhelming forces, beat him, and drove him back to his previous position. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

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Skobeleff was always very busy, and both wrote and read a great deal. His reports to the commander-in-chief, treating of the behaviour of our officers and soldiers in the course of the Russo-Turkish war, and the real causes of our temporary disasters, show remarkable powers of observation and contain many acute remarks. When I was with Skobeleff at Plevna, I read a number of these reports, and learned from him that they were not at all well received in high quarters.

Skobeleff was master of French, English, and German, and had a remarkably thorough knowledge of the country which was the theatre of the Russo-Turkish war. He had a great admiration

for the military genius of Napoleon among men of the past, and of Moltke among his contemporaries. He had a poor opinion of Totleben's abilities, and once, I remember, he was quite enraged because I spoke in praise of Gourko; he could not help laughing when he remembered how that general once ducked under cover to avoid a Turkish shell. The other heroes of the Russo-Turkish war he called cowards and dotards. 'What do you think, Vassily Vassilievitch?' he said to me once on coming out of a council of war, held just after the third attack upon Plevna, in which our great captains had been deliberating whether we should maintain our positions or not. 'What name do such creatures deserve? Imagine an artist who should besmear his canvas continually with reds and blues and greens and other colours, without producing, and without the smallest faculty of producing, any intelligible result!'

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It is impossible for any one who has not actually seen Skobeleff under fire to imagine the calmness and coolness which he displayed in a storm of bullets and shells. Not that this calmness meant insensibility. I have already mentioned that Skobeleff, according to his own testimony,

was full of apprehensions, and at the beginning of a battle always fancied that that day would assuredly be his last. How great, then, must have been his strength of will! What an effort must this calmness have cost him! Indeed, he was always in a state of internal excitement. When he was talking it was almost impossible for him to sit still; he would pace up and down like a caged tiger. When he was obliged to sit still at table, he would take bread or anything else that was within his reach and knead it between his fingers. I often used to take him by the hand and tell him that he really must sit quiet for a little.

For all his courage under fire, he was a regular coward at headquarters and in the presence of high personages. Before his troops he always appeared in smart dress and with his hair neatly trimmed and scented; but when he appeared before his superiors it was always in a worn-out coat, with a cloak hanging all awry, and a cap crushed down on the back of his head, as if he were afraid that his elegance might give as much offence as his gallantry. On my second journey from Paris to the Danube, I visited Skobeleff's mother, who begged me to take a small case which her son much needed. When the luggage was being examined at the custom-house on the frontier I

had to open the case, and found it to contain only cosmetics. In the company of persons of high rank Skobeleff was embarrassed, and wore an air of humility that was almost pitiable, the result, evidently, of suppressed excitement. It is the custom in Russia to kiss the hand of the Czar and the Grand Dukes, or, if you wish to be particularly courteous, to kiss the hand and the shoulder; but Skobeleff went so far as to kiss three times, and performed this ceremony so rapidly that it was impossible to stop him.

This triple kissing, however, he did not reserve exclusively for these exalted personages. Once, when we were breakfasting together in a separate room of a *gargote* in Paris, he could not refrain from bestowing three kisses on the hand of the waitress, though she was a girl of quite ordinary appearance. On this occasion, however, he did not hurry himself, but performed the ceremony with feeling and with appropriate intervals. He actually wished to make this same girl a present of a hundred francs simply because she had changed a note of a thousand francs for him, and though I dissuaded him from this extravagance, he still insisted on giving her twenty francs. This reckless squandering of money is a genuine feature of the Slav character. He was good-natured, but his good-nature almost bordered

on inconsiderateness. For instance, if he met poor people, he generally ordered one of the subalterns who accompanied him to give the poor man a gold piece; but as he often forgot the outlays made for him, and often had no money, it naturally followed that meeting poor people was more alarming to his orderlies than meeting the enemy. Latterly I noticed in him an inclination to do justice. I remember, for example, that after the battle of Shenovo I found him busy with a letter of apology to an officer commanding a battalion under him to whom he had been unjust. A general in command of a detachment who confesses a fault to a major is a rare, if not a unique, phenomenon in any army.

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Skobeleff gave me as a memento his banner which he had carried in twenty-two engagements. The list of these engagements, drawn up carefully by himself, I have deposited in the Imperial library. The banner hangs in my studio; it is a piece of red silk, with a yellow cross, on a Cossack's pike, showing many bullet-holes, and much tattered by all the service it has seen. When he was starting on his last campaign against the Turkomans, he remembered the banner, and said I must give it back to him, or else give him a new one instead.

I did not wish to give him back the old one, and for a long time could not make up my mind to give him a new one, as I knew that if he did not like it he would give it to the men to wrap their feet in. At last, however, I presented him with a very handsome new banner. It consisted on one side of a fringed Indian shawl, and on the other of a piece of red Chinese satin with a St. Andrew's cross in blue, Skobeleff's initials, and the year. I cut out the banner myself and my wife embroidered it. I heard from my brother, who was then serving as one of Skobeleff's orderlies, that the flag was much admired by the general and by the friendly Turkomans, and that they were never tired of looking at it. But presently began a series of misfortunes and failures; the enemy made sallies from Geok-Tepe, killed many of our men, and took a quantity of arms, a flag, and two guns. Skobeleff was in despair. 'Give me back my old banner,' he cried; 'this new one is unlucky.' I refused. The enemy made another sally, and our army again endured heavy loss. He repeated his demand: 'Give me back my lucky banner, and take your unlucky one.' 'I won't give it up,' was my answer. At last Skobeleff took Geok-Tepe by storm, inflicting severe loss on the enemy, taking a great quantity of arms, &c., and

gaining a triumphant success: so that the reputation of my banner was quite re-established, to the great delight of the general and the Turkomans. This beautiful, lucky and unlucky flag now waves over Skobeleff's grave.

This lovable and sympathetic nature was deeply tinged with superstition. Skobeleff believed in lucky and unlucky days, in lucky meetings, in omens and forebodings. Nothing would have induced him to sit down thirteen at table; the spilling of a little salt was enough to make him start or even to jump up from his seat, and he could not stay in a room in which three candles were burning.

* * *

One day Skobeleff said to me, 'Vassily Vassilievitch, what do you take to be the purpose of these Nihilists and Anarchists? I am free to confess that I do not understand what they are about.' 'Their views,' I replied, 'are, as I understand them, first, that there is to be no more war, and secondly, that all painting is humbug; so that if they came into power, you with your generalship and your victories, and I with all my pictures, would be sent to the devil.' 'Now I understand,' said Skobeleff, 'and from this moment I am their determined foe.'

Skobeleff, however, like so many others, failed to understand that the springs of that violent revolutionary movement which goes by the name of Nihilism lie deep down in the present state of society in Russia, and that it is not to be suppressed by any conceivable police regulations. 'I am afraid that something terrible is going to happen,' I said to Skobeleff shortly before he started for Turkestan in 1880, when the attempts upon the life of the late Czar were becoming more and more frequent. 'My belief is,' he replied, 'that they will all be trapped like so many mice.' 'I believe, on the contrary,' said I, 'that they will achieve their purpose and kill the Czar.' After the assassination of Alexander II. Skobeleff said to my brother at Geok-Tepe, 'Vassily Vassilievitch told me some time ago that this was going to happen.'

I remember Skobeleff telling me that on his way through Odessa he met Privy Councillor Panutin, whose business it was to superintend the deportation of Nihilists to the island of Sachalin. There were some seven hundred young people ready to be shipped off, some charged with serious, others with trifling offences, a certain proportion probably being quite innocent. All were brought to the place where, as the Russian proverb says,

'Makar never yet drove his cattle.' 'When are you going to try all these cases?' asked Skobeleff; 'it will take a terribly long time.' 'What is there to try?' answered the councillor; 'it does not take long to sentence them. We just send them off—God may judge them there.'

* * *

Skobeleff's figure stands before me now, the figure of a beloved sympathetic man and highly gifted soldier, with all the merits and faults of the Slav character.

It would be out of place here to repeat what Skobeleff said in the circle of his friends; it is enough to say that he was always an advocate of the normal development of Russia, of progress, not of retrogression.

But it seemed to me that he had no fixed point of view in regard to these questions. I often told him that he might be bribed (not with money, of course, but with honours). He disputed this very warmly, and put on the appearance of being injured; but I believe that I was not mistaken.

Skobeleff was very ambitious, and would hardly have endured even a temporary loss of his command. I attribute the change in his views within the last few months of his life to his ambition.

When I attacked him at our last meeting in Berlin for his violent speech at St. Petersburg, he tried to justify himself. When, however, I pointed out to him that he had done no one any good, and showed into whose hands he was playing by forcing Russia into a war, he looked round to see that no one heard us, and said angrily, 'Then I will tell you the truth, Vassily Vassilievitch. I could not help myself; *they* forced me into it!'

As to who the persons were, I keep silence.

He moreover gave me his word of honour not to make any more such speeches. He promised—and spoke again in Paris.

* * *

P.S.—Skobeleff's last attacks on Germany were not made without definite grounds.

On his return from the manœuvres of the Prussian army, he seemed to me extremely excited; everything that he had seen and heard in Germany pointed, he thought, to a speedy war with Russia: even in the words which the German Emperor addressed to him at his parting audience, words that seemed to me completely innocent, Skobeleff heard a threat. I remember that he imitated the way in which the Emperor William sat there on his horse, and the tone in which, surrounded

by a numerous and brilliant suite, he entrusted him with a greeting to the Emperor of Russia. 'You have subjected us to the closest scrutiny' ('Vous venez de m'examiner jusqu'à mes boyaux'), the German Emperor is reported to have said to him. 'You have only seen two corps, but tell his Majesty the Emperor that all the fifteen corps do their duty equally well when occasion requires.'

These words must be authentic, for Skobeleff noted them down at once. I found nothing in them, as I have already said, which intimated a threat, but Skobeleff thought differently. Still more hostile feelings were roused in him by an expression used by the late Prince Frederick Charles. The Prince, known not only as a brave cavalry officer, but also as an honest and upright man, tapped Skobeleff on the shoulder in a friendly manner and said, 'My dear friend, do what you like, Austria must go to Salonica.'

These words also were at once noted down by Skobeleff, and he could not think of them later with coolness. 'So it is a settled thing,' said he, stalking from one corner to the other of his little room like a tiger in a cage. 'So Germany helps them, and we are to be silent, and look on calmly!' &c.

The speeches he made after this may have been precipitate, but they were not uttered under the influence of wine, as was maintained at the time. This is proved by the above reminiscence.

As soon as the war was finished I returned to my studio, and began to transfer my impressions to canvas—impressions of battles, wounds, disease, and all sorts of misery, the inevitable attendants of every war. The result was such that people would not believe me; they said that I lied, that my pictures were the work of my imagination.

I remember that it was at this time that I made acquaintance with my great countryman Turgenieff, who was then living at Bougival, and consequently was my neighbour. I was then working at Maisons-Laffitte, on the edge of the forest of St.-Germain, where I had built two large studios—one, of enormous size, for the winter, and the other, of somewhat smaller dimensions, for the summer. The latter turns round upon wheels, and enables me to paint my pictures in full sunlight.

I. S. TURGENIEFF.

1879–1883.

I WAS not intimately acquainted with Turgenieff until the last years of his life, of which I now give a short account.

Our acquaintance dates from the time when I was in the lower class of the naval cadet corps (in 1855), to which he brought his nephew, also a Turgenieff. I then knew nothing of his works, but remember that both we cadets and our officers looked at Ivan Sergeievitch with curiosity. In fact, he was worth looking at. He seemed a giant, especially by contrast with little half-developed creatures like us. I can still see him, as if it were yesterday, with his hands crossed behind his back, walking about among our beds.

His nephew, a little fellow, with a face like a pug, was given the very first day his nickname of 'Madcap'; he soon ran away from the corps, but Ivan Sergeievitch brought him back again bound. I forgot to inquire after this nephew; if he was

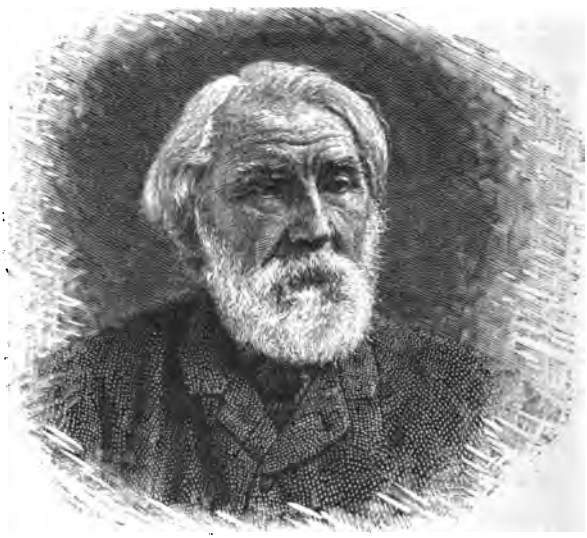
not the Mishka of whom Turgenieff afterwards wrote about and described, he was at any rate very like him.

* * *

Many years passed. I read and re-read 'The Sportsman's Diary,' and then all Turgenieff's stories and novels. It happened that I read Antonovitch's critique on 'Fathers and Sons' before I read the novel itself, and remember very well that it seemed to me partial. But when I read the novel I was much struck by the narrowness and one-sidedness of the critic's judgments. The effect this novel had upon me was immense. I have read it more than once since, discovering each time new beauties, new master-touches, and wondering each time at the author's impartiality and his skill in concealing his likes and dislikes. Not only the chief characters, but also the secondary personages drawn with merely a few touches, were living beings, created by a highly gifted artist.

'Virgin Soil' I did not like at all. In the first part there is much that is natural, and the types are true; but the second part is evidently not the result of observation, but founded on information and conjecture which Turgenieff received at third hand. I used bad language, I confess, when I

read the second part; not that the subject shocked me—not at all; for I am of opinion that in the hands of a great genius anything can be the subject of artistic representation, assuming that this great



TURGENIEFF.

genius is acquainted with the subject on which he writes.

* * *

To illustrate my meaning I will take the well-known French novelist Zola. Some of his novels, e.g. 'L'Assommoir,' move in an atmosphere of truth, and are remarkable for the correctness of the

types; others, like 'Nana,' are weaker. The author is blamed for the filth described in the latter; but I am far from agreeing to that, because in my opinion the representation of certain strata of society is impossible if certain explanations are not made and certain pictures drawn; at any rate, it is important for the history of the development of the human race that all sides of contemporary life should be examined and described. What I find fault with in Zola is that he did not know the stratum of society which he describes in 'Nana' at all; and, as he only grasped its more superficial and prominent features and coarseness, he was not able to investigate and reproduce the internal connection of the phenomena; he piles one deformity on another, and astonishes the reader, but does not convince him.

Passing from these observations to Zola's means and materials, I must observe that it was impossible that he should know the so-called demi-monde. He leads a very retired life, and only once looked into the boudoir of a luxurious *cocotte* while she was absent in order to be able to describe her bedroom. Ivan Sergeievitch told me that he noticed at a party, where the author of 'Nana' was to read, how his friend became more and more nervous and pale as the number of the

guests increased, and that he even trembled. 'What is the matter with you, my dear friend?' asked Turgenieff. 'I confess,' answered Zola, 'that I have never yet had an opportunity of being in a circle of ladies in whose presence one has to be circumspect.' Now, is it conceivable that an author who knows the world so little should be able to describe the private life of the aristocracy, their manners, their society, &c.?

I return to 'Virgin Soil,' to observe that a similar ignorance of the society described, only in quite another sphere, struck me in the second part of this novel. Here nothing is from nature, nothing is founded on observation: everything is out of his head, as artists say.

* * *

It was in the year 1876, if I am not mistaken, that I took rooms in a small hotel in Paris belonging to a Russian, W. I do not know whether he knew Ivan Sergeievitch, or wanted to make his acquaintance when occasion offered, but he once asked me if I was acquainted with Turgenieff. 'By name,' I said, 'I have certainly known him a long time, and have a high opinion of his works.' A few days afterwards W. showed me a letter. 'Do you know the handwriting?' 'No, it is not known to me.'

'It is a letter from Turgenieff, in which he says that he would be glad to make your acquaintance; go and see him when you like.' I replied that I should certainly not go, as I did not like begging for acquaintance with celebrated people. I enjoined him not to write any more such letters in my name.

* * *

After the Turkish war the painter Bogoliuboff remarked casually, 'There is a man who wants to know you very much indeed.' 'Who is it?' 'Ivan Sergeievitch Turgenieff.' I was heartily pleased, and sent a request that he would visit me at any time that suited him. When this cherished guest came to Maisons-Laffitte, I frankly confess that I wanted to fall on his neck and tell him how deeply I admired and respected him. But it was not to be. I was obliged to introduce a friend, General S., who was present, and we only exchanged a few commonplace friendly words. Turgenieff looked at my work with great interest. Two or three pictures of the Turkish war were already begun. He was particularly pleased with my picture of the transport of the wounded, and he gave a name to each of the soldiers represented in the picture. 'That is Nikifor, from Tamboff; that is Sidoroff, from Nijni, &c.'

Ivan Sergeievitch paid me two more visits afterwards, and brought with him his friend Oniegin, who visited the author during his last illness more frequently than the rest of us.

* * *

I also went to see Turgenieff several times. At the time of my first visit he was suffering from gout. Even then the attacks of the malady were evidently very violent, as could be seen from his extremely exhausted and weak appearance after each attack.

Turgenieff treated his visitors with remarkable amiability and kindness; inquired sympathetically, even during his illness, after the works which were in hand, and those which were to come, and spoke modestly and sincerely about himself, in a refined voice, and with a good-natured smile on his face.

It rather seemed to me, and I think I was not mistaken, that after the ovations which were given him in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Ivan Sergeievitch became a little more self-conscious. In his letters he now wrote 'Dear,' instead of 'Honoured,' but he always remained friendly and ready to help as far as lay in his power. When I exhibited my works in Paris, he first helped me to find a place

for the exhibition, and then introduced me to the Paris public by a few lines in the 'XIX. Siècle.'

He helped, moreover, not only with advice, but with material assistance, all who applied to him. He gave help in money to many young men who were forced to leave Russia and 'Nihilized,' as one of them expressed it, in Paris. (I drew Ivan Sergeievitch's attention to this characteristic expression, and he laughed heartily at it.)

The assistance which he gave to the emigrants, his free and independent way of thinking, and, above all, the publication of the narrative of a youth who, owing to a misunderstanding, spent four years in prison, caused Turgenieff to be considered a Red Republican in the upper circles in St. Petersburg. In 1880 he took an opportunity of telling me, with evident uneasiness, that Prince Orloff had visited him, and brought him an order to return to Russia. I was sincerely convinced that there was nothing in it, and that there could be nothing, and told him so with confidence, but I remember that his anxiety did not disappear. In fact, nobody at St. Petersburg molested him, and the order he had received was probably only intended as a warning.

* * *

The fact that Turgenieff was intending to write a great novel, and had already begun it, I first learnt from his friend the well-known German critic Pietsch, and afterwards from himself; after his death I was told that he had sketched a novel which treated of the intellectual movement among the Russian youth of modern times. Its purport was said to be as follows: A cultivated young Russian lady becomes acquainted in Paris with a young Frenchman, a Radical, and is intimate with him, but afterwards leaves him to join a representative of Russian Radicalism, whose views and convictions are exactly opposed to those which the Frenchman holds on the same questions.

Judging from his last works, not excepting 'Clara Militch,' one is forced to the conclusion that the talent of the author of 'Fathers and Sons' can hardly have risen to its former height. Certainly even in his last works we meet with many beautiful thoughts and masterly sketches, but as a rule his characters no longer have their former quiet attractiveness nor their former freshness and life.

The impression left by his smaller works, e.g. by the 'Poems in Prose,' is for the most part a depressing one. They constantly remind me of the phrase with which he once answered me when

I asked how he was: 'I am beginning to feel the gloom of death.'

Even such reminiscences as the story of 'Mishka' are, as far as type of characters go, far behind 'The Sportsman's Diary.' The former tale ('Mishka') I heard from the author's lips, and it then made an incomparably greater impression upon me than when I read it later.

I knew that Turgenieff recited well, but latterly he was always tired, began to speak lazily and against the grain, and only grew slightly more lively when he threw himself into his part. On this occasion, when, in reciting the story of 'Mishka,' he came to the passage where Mishka leads a whole company of dancing beggars, Ivan Sergeievitch got up briskly from his chair, made gestures with his hands, and began to dance a Russian *trepak*—and how he did dance it! He bent his knees and sang, 'Tra-ta-ta-ta-ta! Tra-ta-ta!' He seemed forty years younger as he bent himself; and how he moved his shoulders this way and that! His grey locks fell over his face, which was rosy, beaming, and happy. I was delighted with him, and could not refrain from clapping my hands and calling out, 'Bravo! bravo! bravo!' He did not seem in the least tired, for as long as I sat with him he continued his lively recitation. And yet

that was shortly before disease clutched him in its claws, as he expressed it. Now, when I know that already at that time two vertebræ were attacked by cancer, I cannot think of that hour without astonishment.

* * *

I was myself suffering from a severe attack of illness in the spring of 1882, when I learnt that Turgenieff was seriously ill. As soon as I could get up, at the beginning of the summer, I drove to see him. I called out to him from the stairs. 'What is the meaning of this? How can anybody be ill so long?' Entering the room, I saw the same kindly smile and heard the same refined voice. 'What is to be done? Sickness holds me fast, and will not let me go.' There was no decided change in Ivan Sergeievitch since the day I had seen him dance, and that misled me: I was firmly convinced that he would recover, and told everybody so who asked me.

Turgenieff was very lively, and although he complained of constant and very severe neuralgic pains in his chest and back, yet he begged me to stay with him, told stories with animation, raising himself up in bed and laughing a great deal. Among other things, we talked of literature and

his own writings. Ivan Sergeievitch expressed his great respect for Leff Tolstoi's talent, but added: 'What Tolstoi has not got is poetry: it is completely wanting in his productions.' I did not refrain from expressing my opinion, which was the reverse of his, and mentioned as examples the highly poetical creations of 'The Cossacks,' 'Polikushka,' and others. Turgenieff seemed to keep to his own opinion, but did not discuss it further.

Lavroff, a well-known character, who had been lately banished from France, was in the room when I came to pay my visit. When he had taken his departure, Turgenieff asked me not to tell anybody that I had seen Lavroff, and told me a curious little piece of French administration. L. was banished from France, but, after much protesting, the prefect of police summoned Turgenieff and asked him about L. Turgenieff could only tell him that L. was the most harmless of men, although an idealist who was easily carried away. 'We believe you,' said the prefect, and L. received secret permission to come to France, one might almost say through Turgenieff's mediation.

* * *

I still believe to-day, as I did then in talking to Turgenieff, that he was wrong in assigning himself a too modest place among Russian authors. Bielinski, to be sure, did not think highly of him; but that may be explained by the fact that Turgenieff had not then attained maturity and had too much scientific cultivation for a Russian genius; while Bielinski, who well knew the want of finish in the native diamonds, did not quite understand the combination in one person of a literary genius of the first rank and a serious Hegelian. In cultivation Turgenieff certainly stood above all our authors. As regards power, he is perhaps behind some others; but in the fulness and loftiness of his creative genius he ranks next to Pushkin and Leff Tolstoi. The plot of a story—a matter which many think unimportant, but which, in my opinion, is the most difficult part of the work of creation, and in which but few succeed—is almost always good in Turgenieff. It seems easier to sketch characters than to make them act according to life, and die naturally. Gogol, for instance, has a great gift for delineating character, but is weak in inventing plots; and expressive as a large number of his characters appear when taken singly, the whole course of the action is correspondingly weak; only children and half-

educated people can treat seriously the story of the 'Dead Souls' which are to be transported to the government of Chersson or some other country, or the deeds of 'Revisor,' &c. Moreover, the fact must not be disregarded that such talent, if we take the above-mentioned Gogol as an example, is one-sided: by the side of a negative type of character, which is strikingly powerful and true to nature, he places a positive type which is absolutely false and perfectly worthless.

With Turgenieff it is different. To be just, it must be confessed that the characters in the 'Diary of a Sportsman,' though they show great insight, nevertheless rank lower than those astonishing characters of Gogol's; but they live and act in a rational manner—no invisible power forces them into actions and vaudeville intrigues, which are repugnant to a healthy human understanding. Further, Turgenieff, as has been said before, is successful not only with this or that favourite type of character, but all his personages, insipid and sensible, clever and stupid, fathers and children—all are equally true, and defined with equal clearness.

I repeat—in the completeness and the elevation of his genius he has, in my opinion, very few equals besides Pushkin and Leff Tolstoi; none perhaps,

except Lermontoff, in his prose. The characters in the latter's poems are indistinct and not at all natural.

* * *

But let us return to Turgenieff's illness. During the last visit I paid him (the one mentioned above) he complained sadly that he could not travel to Russia. 'Why,' I asked, 'do you want to go to Russia now? You ought first to get well, quite well, here.' 'Quite true, but there I could go on with my work; I have something in my head which can only be written there.' He shook his head significantly.

Turgenieff was ill all through the autumn and winter. I had no opportunity of speaking to any of the doctors who were attending him, and thought that his illness was not fatal.

Once, when I was in Rue de Douai, I wrote a few words asking about his state, and sent the note up to him; but the servant brought it back. M. Turgenieff was lying down, and was unable to read. The blinds were drawn down. He asked for my name. I understood that his condition was serious, and went away so as not to disturb him.

On my return from my second tour in India I inquired again. He was very ill, and no one was

admitted. When I came back from Moscow I met Oniegin, whom I have mentioned before, and learnt from him that not only Ivan Sergeievitch's months but his days were numbered. I drove to Bougival, where he then was. On the way, his figure as it had formerly been rose up before my eyes; but when I entered the room, intending to begin the conversation with a joke as of old, the words stuck in my throat. On the couch, his body contorted with suffering, lay Turgenieff, but apparently not the one I had known, not the majestic figure with the beautiful head, but a little man, emaciated, as yellow as wax, with sunken eyes, and sad, lifeless expression.

He seemed to perceive the painful impression he made, and immediately began to talk of dying, saying that there was no hope, &c. 'We two,' he added, 'are different in character. I was always weak; you were strong and decided.' Tears came into my eyes; I tried to contradict him, but Ivan Sergeievitch interrupted me irritably: 'For God's sake, leave off trying to console me, Vassily Vassilievitch: I am not a child, and can estimate my position. My malady is incurable; I suffer to such an extent that I call upon death a hundred times a day. I do not fear parting from life, and regret nothing; one or two friends, whom one does not

exactly love, but to whom one has grown accustomed——.'

I took up his tone a little; but when I admitted that he had got worse, I heard Oniegin, who was present, hastily correct me—'How could one help looking worse after such a long illness?' I comprehended that caution was to be used, and maintained that where there was no directly fatal disease death was not unavoidable, and that he was not yet of the age when one must die. 'You are only sixty-five, are you?' 'Sixty-four,' he corrected me, and began again to oppose what I said, but received my words of consolation more calmly; one could see that they were not unpleasant to him, and that he himself had still some hope.

He asked me about my work, where I was, and where I intended to travel. I told him that I was going to take the waters, and should reappear again in a month—'I give you a month's respite; if you do not recover in that time, beware: you will have to reckon with me.' Ivan Sergeievitch smiled at this threat. 'If you come in a month, in three or six months, you will still find me in the same condition.'

I took the liberty of warning him against the frequent use of morphia; if narcotics were absolutely necessary, he should at any rate use it alter-

nately with chloral. 'I should be very glad; but what is to be done? When the pains are excruciating one is ready to take anything in the world to lessen them.'

That day Turgenieff was dressed, as he had tried a drive; but driving over paved streets tired him. He soon came back, and was then intending to retire to his bed. That was the last time he went out of the house.

Oniegin, with whom I went away, told me as we went, 'Turgenieff does not know that he will not live even as long as he says. I have heard from Doctor Bielogolofy that all his blood-vessels are giving way.'

* * *

About a month later I returned. Ivan Sergeievitch lay in his bed. He had grown yellower and more withered; there was no doubt that he was dying. I had read in the Russian papers that he was better and drove out, and in that belief I went to him.

He introduced me to his old friend Toporoff, who was sitting by his bedside. 'You are better, I hear? You take drives?'

'Oh,' groaned the sick man, 'what kind of improvement is this, and how can I, chained to my

bed, think of drives? Who told you that?' 'I read it in the paper.' 'Can one believe what the papers say? See how I look!'

'I know,' he began, when we were alone, 'that I shall not live to see the New Year.' 'How do you know that?' 'I see it in everything, feel it myself, and gather it from the doctor's words also; they intimate that I should put my affairs in order.' It seemed odd to me that the doctors, who, as far as I knew, constantly gave him hopes, as well as all those around him, should say that to him. Turgenieff did not make that remark without cause, as I learnt later.

I was just going to reply to him with 'What can we do? We must all come to that——' but when I saw how his dying eyes looked penetratingly at me awaiting my answer I suppressed these words and said, 'Even doctors can be mistaken.' I quoted Count Chambord as an example, to whom the doctors foretold a certain death, and whose condition improved—an example which was, to be sure, a very unfortunate one, as Count Chambord actually did die soon afterwards. Turgenieff, however, listened attentively: one could see that he had by no means lost all hope, and that he wished others should hope also. He regretted that he had not been able to do all that was neces-

sary. 'You say you have not done anything?' 'Not that—you do not understand me: I am speaking of my affairs, which I did not put in order at the right time.' 'But that can be easily remedied.' 'No, that is impossible. My estate,' he continued in a low voice, 'has not yet been sold. I have always been meaning to sell it, but was always undecided and put it off.' 'Of course it was hard for you to part with it.' 'Yes, it was hard; but if I die now the estate will go to God knows whom,' and he shook his head sadly.

I thought he was troubled about his daughter, whom I had once met at his house and become acquainted with. She is a very pretty woman of a slight form, a brunette, very like her father, and married to a Frenchman, whose circumstances had not been very brilliant latterly. As I learnt afterwards, however, he was troubled because it was not possible for him to bestow all his property on the person for whom he had cherished a special affection almost all his life.

Ivan Sergeievitch inquired with the greatest interest about my family, my wife, my late parents, and my brothers. At the beginning of our conversation he asked his attendant, Madame Arnold, to make an injection of morphia. She did it, and asked him if he would not have breakfast.

'What is there?' 'Salmon.' He seemed to consider, raised his hand to his head, and thought a long time.

'Well, give me some salmon, at any rate, and some soft-boiled eggs.' One could see that he still had some appetite. 'How is your digestion?' 'I digest nothing, so I will eat this salmon and take the consequences.'

I again spoke of morphia and begged him not to inject too much. 'It does not matter,' he said; 'my complaint is incurable, I know.' After mentioning the scientific name of his complaint, he added: 'Take a medical dictionary: look it up. There you will find it put down in plain terms as "incurable."'

'In a week's time I shall pay you another visit.' 'Come; but take care: if you come in two weeks' time they will be carrying me out feet foremost.'

As I left him I held up my finger threateningly and called out, 'Beware of too much morphia.' With a smile he nodded his head in sign of agreement, and followed me with a sad look, which stayed in my memory. It happened as he said: almost exactly two weeks later he was a corpse.

And how much he wished to live!

* * *

The impression I received from my last visit was so sad that I did not go again for four days.

It was afternoon, and Ivan Sergeievitch was asleep, having just had an injection of morphia. I sat in the next room, a modest, comfortable apartment arranged in bachelor fashion—a writing-table, a Turkish divan, many pictures on the walls, chiefly by Russian artists, and a not particularly successful portrait of Turgenieff himself.

I conversed with Madame Arnold, who had taken care of the invalid for a long time. She said that they still hoped for his recovery, that the doctors had different opinions about the disease, and that she personally was made most uneasy by the fact that the gout had totally disappeared from the feet, and consequently must have gone higher. I had heard the patient himself talk about that even at the beginning of his illness; he said plainly that he felt the gout already in the region of the heart. At my last visit he said, complaining of the diminution of his strength, 'If you were only to see my feet—just look—nothing but bones.' I decided not to look, for my late father came into my mind, whose feet had completely withered before his death. Madame Arnold declared that nobody had ever advised Turgenieff to arrange his affairs, and that it was only a stratagem on his part

to discover my opinion of his condition, because he suspected that the people round him had agreed to soothe him by concealing the truth. However, it is improbable that his regret was quite unfounded; he had probably been urged by somebody or other to arrange his affairs more quickly. Madame Arnold also told me that many Paris celebrities visited Ivan Sergeievitch, among others Emil Augier. 'C'est un auteur dramatique très-connu,' she added by way of explanation; 'he came lately to read a new piece.'

I will here mention that I seldom heard Turgenieff express an opinion about either past or present celebrities. He once spoke of A. S. Pushkin in a very reverent and serious tone; the expression of his face at that moment was very like the portrait which is prefixed to the complete edition of his works; he wrinkled his brow and raised his fore-finger significantly. I remember, among other things, his telling me a story about Victor Hugo, which shows that the poet was not very well read—'We were talking of Goethe; Hugo disagreed with me, and attacked Goethe for his "Wallenstein." "But, Maître," I said, "'Wallenstein' was not written by Goethe, but by Schiller." "Oh, well, it's all the same," answered

Hugo, and began to talk at random, to conceal his mistake.'

Madame Arnold also told me that Turgenieff was much agitated by a letter which he wrote from his deathbed to Leff Tolstoi, begging him not to lay down his pen, but to continue to use it in the service of his country—'I was sitting by the table when he called me; he gave me a piece of paper on which he had written in pencil, and said: "Please send this off at once: it is very, very urgent."'

* * *

I was laid up by a very violent cold, and went into hospital, so that I was not able to drive to Bougival for eight or ten days.

'M. Turgenieff is very ill,' the servant said as I entered the house; 'the doctor has just gone; he thought my master would not live through the day.' Was it possible? I went quickly into the little house—not a soul anywhere; I went up the stairs—no one there either. The whole Viardot family were sitting in their room; there was also a Russian there—Prince Meshtchersky, who sometimes visited Turgenieff, and had been sitting by him for the last three days with the Viardots. They came round me and told me that the invalid

was hopelessly ill and that the end was not far off.

'Go and see him.' 'No, I will not disturb him.' 'You will not disturb him, for he lies in the death-agony.' I entered the room. Ivan Sergeievitch lay on his back, his arms stretched out and pressed close to his body, his eyes almost closed, his mouth terribly wide open; and his head, sunk far back, a little turned to the left, rose at each breath: something evidently was choking the sick man; he wanted something; he could not breathe. I could not bear the sight, and burst into tears.

The death-struggle had begun some hours before; the end seemed near. The other members of the household went to breakfast, and I remained by the bedside with Madame Arnold, who constantly moistened the sick man's dry tongue.

The sitting-room wore a desolate aspect; a servant was bustling about the room, dusting and sweeping without pity, and talking loudly with the other servants as they went to and fro. One could see that there was no longer any reason for consideration.

In a low voice Madame Arnold told me that Turgenieff had taken leave of everybody the evening before, and immediately after began to wander. I had already heard from Meshtchersky that the

delirium probably came on when Ivan Sergeievitch began to talk Russian. Nobody, of course, among those round him understood him, and they all asked, 'Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?' 'Farewell, my dear ones,' murmured Turgenieff. 'My——' 'I cannot at all understand that last expression,' observed Meshtchersky; 'it seems to me as if Ivan Sergeievitch thought himself a Russian *paterfamilias* taking leave of his family and household.'

Twice a sad moan came from Turgenieff's lips; he turned his head a little and moved it straight. His hands did not stir once during a whole hour. His breathing became slower and weaker. I intended to stay till the last moment, but Meshtchersky begged me in the name of the Viardot family to go to Doctor Brouardel and tell him what I had seen, or, in the event of his absence, to leave a letter describing the patient's condition. I took the letter, and touched for the last time Ivan Sergeievitch's hand, which was already growing cold.

* * *

An hour later Turgenieff was dead.

Not finding Doctor Brouardel at home, I left the letter for him; the doctor did not come till the third day. I telegraphed to two intimate acquaint-

ances of the deceased, Oniegin and Prince Orloff. I wished also to send the news to our distant home; but as I could not count myself among the friends of the deceased, I did not think I was justified in sending news of this national grief in my own name.

At the end of this book of sketches I venture to add some reflections upon various matters suggested by travel, that good schoolmaster—a few words first about Siberia, the frontier of China, &c., then about creeds and religions, &c.

IN SIBERIA.

It is remarkable that the idea of the great Siberian railway has not yet been realized. After the many resolutions which have been arrived at with regard to this railway, people seem to be once more asking whether there is really any such hurry. When years have gone by, people will be astonished at this delay. In the meantime, in consequence of the great distance and the isolation, this territory has remained a hundred years behind, and sighs under the burden of all possible abuses.

A Siberian once said to me, 'You in Russia have many laws, but we in Siberia have only two: the twenty-five-rouble law and the hundred-rouble law.' The very expression of the Siberian, 'you in Russia,' is extremely characteristic, and shows clearly the isolation of the territory. This expression, to be sure, is also heard in Turkestan, in the Caucasus, and in the Baltic and Polish provinces; but what has some meaning there seems simply incomprehensible in the mouth of an inhabitant of Siberia, which has a purely Russian

population. If not in the interest of agriculture and of trade, then for the development of the gold industry, so dear to administrative minds, a window looking towards Siberia ought to be hewn out instead of the present wretched air-hole which goes by the name of the Siberian road.

This road is not safe, but, on the contrary, full of holes. Lucky are those who travel directly the sleigh-track is established, for they get on in a more or less human fashion. But if in the summer one gets into the worn-out tracks, or in winter into the holes, then it is time to make your will. There is only one thing to be done then: to do your best to fall into a lasting torpor.

I twice had occasion to travel on the Siberian road—once from, and once back to Omsk, where one turns off to go to Turkestan. On both occasions I drove post. I often went four hundred versts in twenty-four hours, but then it also happened that we went round in a circle in a snowstorm the whole night, and I awoke the next morning, almost frozen, two versts from the station from which we had started. One can freeze, too, without a snowstorm and without wind. I remember once going to sleep when there were twenty-five degrees (Réaumur) of frost, but no wind, and awaking with frost-bitten ears, nose, and chin. The

postmaster, an old Cossack, observed: 'Father, your nose is frost-bitten.' 'Impossible!' 'Good heavens! and your ears too! Allow me to rub them with goose-fat, then it will pass off.' And so, in fact, it did.

* * *

All kinds of things happen on this road, and one has to endure all kinds of discomfort. Out of my many experiences I will only quote two or three specimens.

One summer's night, which was so dark that I could not see my hand before my eyes, I arrived at a station. We called for horses. The post-horses, which had been standing perhaps a fortnight without work, were so fresh that two people had to hold each of them while they were being harnessed. I did not leave the tarantass, for I had fastened the leather apron tight about me and lay half-asleep. At last everything is ready; the *yamshtchik* (postillion), with his cheeks bound up, takes his seat on the box; the men spring aside, the horses rear, and off we go at a mad pace. It seems to me in my sleep as if we were not going straight, but in a circle, and I also hear the despairing exclamations of the yamshtchik—'The devil take it, I have forgotten the right rein!'

Having started with one rein, he pulled with all his might, so that we really described a circle. It gradually dawned upon me that on the way to the station we had driven up a hill, and that we were now rushing madly down it at a furious speed. It was a bad look-out. To jump out was the only thing to be done. I try to undo the apron, but do not succeed, for it is fastened with several buttons, not only on the inside but also on the outside. I try to tear it, but that won't do at all; the tarantass had been lately bought in Kasan, and the apron was new. I sit down again in my seat and resign myself to my fate. In the meantime the horses had described a circle, had got back into the old road, and were again tearing down the hill. It is difficult to say how long that lasted—probably not long; but I remember that the time did not seem short. At last deliverance came. The three horses with the tarantass flew at full speed head over heels into a ditch. I lie stretched out in a puddle; upon me—on my back, my feet, and even on my head—lie my boxes and trunks; and on the top of them the carriage, with the wheels upwards. When they set me free I groaned—more from fright than from any other reason, for I had come off with scratched face and hands. Of course I gave vent to my annoyance.

The horses were re-harnessed, and this time properly. I again lay in a half sleep.

* * *

On another occasion—it was by daylight—on leaving the station I was obliged to cross a little bridge, at which the road, with a sharp turn, goes steeply up-hill. Already at the station the horses had behaved as if mad; on the bridge the yamshtchik still held them in a little; but further on his power came to an end, and the horses rushed up the hill—not on the road, however, but on a high mound by the side of it. When the horses had gone three quarters of the way up the hill, they toppled back with the tarantass. And again I escaped without injury; at most a blue mark or a slight grazing of the skin.

* * *

I was once driving on a winter's night in a little post-kibitka through a region which was not quite safe. The sleigh was well covered, and I was comfortably asleep. We suddenly halted. Was anything the matter? No: some one gets into the sleigh and seats himself between me and the yamshtchik. I raise the hood a little: close opposite to me sits a bearded man. I open it as wide as I

can and creep forwards. He seizes hold of me. 'What do you want?' 'I am forced . . .' As far as I could see, it was a powerful peasant with a large beard and a tall hat, his face half concealed. It was either a robber or a madman.

My first impulse was to seize my pocket revolver and shoot him. But it flashed across me, 'What if he is a madman?' and without further consideration I seized the fellow by the collar with my left hand and struck him in the face with the revolver. It cannot have been a bad blow, for the revolver broke, and the fellow flew into the snow, putting his hands to his face. 'Go on,' I called out to the yamshtchik. 'Why did you stop and let him get in?' 'He called out "Stop!" and got in. I thought he belonged to you.' A good explanation! 'But now go on.' On I go again once more, half asleep.

Not till the next morning, three stages further on, did I tell my adventure to the inspector as I was having my tea. 'Why,' he asked, 'did you not tell them that at the station? The yamshtchik was in league with the fellow. They would have robbed the sleigh and put an end to you. The people here are a lawless set.'

The station-master, who entertained me with good cabbage-soup, omelet, and tea, was extremely

amiable, as, indeed, a great number of his colleagues are if one does not abuse them.

When he learnt my name from the passport he turned to me with the words, 'Allow me to ask you a question: Are you not engaged in the preparation of cheese?' 'No; that is my brother.' 'Oh, we have heard of it—they say it ought to be introduced here; but allow me to remark that the cheeses which are now made are no good for Russians, in my opinion. If one is drinking spirits a pickled gherkin or an anchovy tastes better; if it must be cheese, then a strong one. I was in town in the winter and ate some cheese there for lunch. The tears came into my eyes, I can tell you, when I put it into my mouth, and my cheek even swelled up. That is what I call cheese—that is to our taste. But the horses are ready.'

* * *

A wit once called Siberia a Polish kingdom. In fact, Poles are very numerous there in all parts. If you break a bolt or a lynch-pin on the way, or you want a wheel mended, a Polish smith appears. Such work is, however, also done by Germans and Russians. But if you buy a well-smoked ham or sausage, Polish hands are sure to have prepared it; or if you get a well-dressed cutlet at an inn, then

the cook is certainly a *Shlachtits*,[1] or, if it is a woman, *Shlachtitsa*, who has voluntarily followed her husband into banishment. In the billiard-rooms at the inns at Omsk, which I had occasion to visit, nothing but Polish was to be heard.

Of course Russian exiles are not lacking there, but on the road one meets them less often. Driving through towns and villages, one sees old men with long white beards, and sticks in their hands, sitting idly about, or creeping along by the fences. I do not know how they contrive to live, but sometimes they do not disdain to take alms.

At one station, while the horses were being put to, a tall miserable-looking old man with snow-white hair came up to the steps. I was about to get up and go out to him; but the station-master, who flew out of his room like a whirlwind, prevented me. I hear a clatter, and see the old man hurrying away before he has had time to put his cap on again. 'What is the meaning of that? why do you treat him so?' 'If you only give him a penny you will never get rid of him. The moment a traveller arrives, the old man is on the spot. His name is well known; it is Baron R.'

* * *

[1] A Pole.

It is not only for Siberia that the Siberian railway is important: it is almost more important for those countries, once the northern provinces of China, but now belonging to Russia, which up to the present time can scarcely be reached except by water.

In any case we shall have to measure our

CHINAMAN OF THE FRONTIER.

strength with China before very long. The annexation of Kuldsha on the eastern frontier was a great mistake, but a still greater mistake was the giving back of this province in consequence of China's threats. We had certainly committed a crying injustice; and to confess that was not dishonourable. But the misfortune is that so-called politics and so-called morals seldom agree. Now it

looks as if Russia yielded Kuldsha against her will from fear of a war with China; 300,000,000 Chinese are sincerely convinced of it, and 300,000,000 other neighbours assuredly think the same. The Chinese have become more haughty and intriguing in their relations with Russians; and even if there were not misunderstandings and constant friction on the frontier, the European complications would give the Chinese an opportunity of exhausting our patience.

An encounter on the eastern and north-eastern frontiers, however deplorable on other accounts, would be by no means dangerous, because a few Russian battalions could press on victoriously almost up to the Great Wall. But on the northern frontier it is different. Here the Chinese might overrun and devastate the country almost unchecked, and the echo of their success might resound along our other Asiatic frontiers, particularly among the nomads, who certainly have no sympathy with the Chinese, but yet might combine with them temporarily against the Russians. Under such circumstances the consequences might be very serious.

The quicker a line is carried through Siberia the better.

* * *

The constant and uncontrollable extension of our frontier is a question of the highest importance. Resolutions have again and again been made, but have never been carried out; and this fact, by reason of the great distance of the territory, has passed almost without notice. Even the annexation of large territories to Russia attracts the attention of society less than the daily political scandals of Europe. It is time that all this were changed.

The Chinese maintain that the Russians are an unceremonious people; wherever they cut hay or water their horses they take possession of land and water. This, to be sure, does not apply to the Russians only; the English, for example, deserve this reproach even more. But still it cannot be denied that we too have a keen eye to our own interests.

Before the revolt of the Dunghans, our frontier near Kuldsha ran close to a mountain ridge past which the high road went. But between 1865 and 1870 I found that our frontier-guard, and with it our frontier, had advanced as far as Borohudsir. If we ask what is the object of this, the answer is, that at Borohudsir there is a stream with good clear water; therefore it is more comfortable for the guard to be stationed here. Later the question

was raised whether the frontier-guard should not be ordered further still to the little ruined town of Ak-Kend; and why? There is a little wood there, and the little wood provides cool shade in the summer and fuel in the winter.

The history of the conquest of Turkestan is well known; every new governor thought it his duty to play the soldier. Turkestan, Tchenkend, and Alie-Ata were taken in order to form the Oxenburg and Siberian line of fortification; Tashkend was thrown into the bargain. In this combination, Chodsend was left on one side, and it was quite easy to leave it in peace. But how leave it in peace when it is in a state of disorder? So Chodsend was taken too. Ura-Tiube, Tchisak, Samarkand, and afterwards Khokand, were, in the same way, only taken because they were in a state of disorder: there was no real necessity for the step.

Since the migration of the Tarantshes into our territory, we have a fanatic Mohammedan population settled along the whole of our frontier, who are only waiting for a favourable moment to show their teeth. As long as they were under the power of the Khans, who lived in implacable enmity towards each other, they were far less dangerous than now, when they can turn against their common enemy on the first good opportunity. In this

case, we have created a national union, which did not exist before.

There would be some sense in this terribly expensive territorial aggrandizement if it were to serve as a demonstration against European enemies. But even if our advance southwards could be more or less justified by such a policy, it was incompre-

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hensible why the frontier was extended eastwards, where, if the advance goes on at its present rate, we shall undoubtedly be far beyond Kuldsha in no very long time. We can only hope that this result may be put off as long as possible. To prevent it from taking place seems impossible after what has previously occurred. It is almost as if some occult natural force were urging us onwards. I

am here unconsciously reminded of the emigrants from the government of Tamboff, whom I met by the lake of Issyk-Kul in Thiang-Shang. The women had already tried more than once to persuade their husbands to stop and settle; but the peasants refused: they would go on without knowing whither. At last they came to the snow-mountains which encompass Issyk-Kul on the east. The women exclaimed joyfully, with outstretched hands: 'God be thanked! now our husbands will stop; they cannot go any farther.'

SOME THOUGHTS UPON RELIGIONS.

In the course of my many long journeys I have had opportunity of becoming acquainted with the representatives of various religions. All naturally think their religion is the only true one—the one which leads to happiness in this life, and to salvation and blessedness in the life to come; and all religions look upon each other with intolerance and contempt. With respect to intolerance, it is hard indeed to decide which religion bears the palm. One might be inclined to suppose that the bolder and more improbable the hypothesis which underlies a religion the greater would be the forbearance which the unbelieving opponents might claim; but in reality nearly the reverse is the case.

The contradiction between a doctrine and its practical application is very glaring in the case of such religions as Buddhism, for instance, which rests on contemplation, and Christianity, which was based by its great Founder upon love of one's neighbour. The first split into two chief sects and

several small communities, which openly confess their dislike of each other; the Christian Church broke up into three large Churches, besides a number of smaller bodies, all of which take up a hostile and contemptuous attitude towards one another.

This antagonism appears nowhere with such vigour as in Palestine, and particularly in Jerusalem, at the very spots which are associated with the life and suffering of the Great Teacher of peace and love. The Christian Churches there take pains to do each other mischief, not only by speech and by writing, but also by sheer force, by downright violence. At all the holy places—from Bethlehem, where Christ was born, to the temples of Golgotha and of the Holy Sepulchre, where He was crucified and buried —there is disputing, abusive language, and even fighting, on the smallest provocation; they hack at one another, and use as weapons not only church candlesticks and the heavy wax tapers, but also swords and firearms. At the holy places of Christendom there generally stands, or sits, swinging his legs, a Turkish soldier, with loaded gun and fixed bayonet, as peacemaker between the warring representatives of the Christian Church! This, it would seem, is the only way in which we are at present able (or likely for a long time to

be able) to give practical realization to our ideal doctrine.

* * *

On journeying through the world one makes the discovery that abstract religious principles (however ideal and right they may be) are incomparably more difficult to infuse into the national consciousness than principles of practical philosophy which are suitable to the character of the people, to their country and their climate, and which satisfy the physical as well as the moral needs of human nature. The preponderance of abstract ideas in Christianity, and of principles of practical philosophy in Mahomedanism, explains to a certain extent the eagerness of the Mahomedan to fulfil all the duties imposed by his religion, and the absence of this eagerness in the Christian.

As an example of this, we may take two doctrines of Mahomedanism and of Christianity which certainly present a glaring contrast. Mahomed teaches: 'Revenge for every injury; no forbearance towards the enemy.' And the believers follow his teaching eagerly, and take revenge for hundreds of years on generation after generation of their enemies. Christ, on the other hand, says: 'Take no count of the evil that is done you,

but return good for evil.' The Christians repeat His saying after Him, but do not carry out His precept.

We shall search in vain for Christian states or communities where the precepts of Christ are really carried out. On the other hand, it is beyond all doubt that Moses' saying, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' is, like Mahomed's teaching, more in accordance with human nature than the ideal precept, 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you.' The former precepts have become part of man's flesh and blood, and are engrained in his nature, which cannot be said of Christ's command.

* * *

It would be unjust to maintain that religions have no ennobling influence upon human nature; but there is no doubt that in course of time they lose their freshness, are tainted with formalism, and come to be mainly an affair of externals; while, on the other hand, they contribute to the development of various bad qualities in their professors, such as hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness. Even such an ideal doctrine as that of Christ will then lose its chief charm and attractiveness, and sink into an instrument for the attainment of petty ends.

In this respect the impression produced upon me by England—the country which stands at the head of the civilized world, which assuredly owes a great deal to Christianity, but is hampered by a narrow official conception of Christ's doctrine—is a somewhat gloomy one. Who does not know the deep contempt for poverty which reigns in England, though poverty is placed by the Gospel so high above wealth? How completely has the Christian doctrine of the sanctity and privacy of prayer been transformed! The Englishman says practically, 'Whether you believe or not, go to church.' Is not this a distortion of the Gospel? I am here forced to think of the English churches in India, where the high English officials, *plus royalistes que le roi*, put on an appearance of piety, while the poor Indians, baking in the sun and the hot dust, pull great fans to and fro to waft coolness to them in their sham devotion. Certainly, if Christ were to come on the scene, He would put in practice His saying: 'The last shall be first, and the first last.'

Of course it is not to England alone that these remarks are applicable. In a similar way a great portion of the Christian nations distort their religion, which is made subordinate to various earthly needs and subject to the soiling of everyday life, and, to put it briefly, loses its sublimity. My

meaning is very well illustrated by the words which I once heard from a very brave and clever Russian general, who actually used religion as an instrument of discipline. 'You may say what you like,' the general once observed to me: 'for soldiers the support given by religion is of great importance. If the chaplain reads the troops a passage from the Gospel before the battle, and lets them kiss the cross, they march with heightened courage into the fight. It is as if the dread of death and wounds were then blown away. I applied this means before the assault on ——, and obtained an astonishing result. To be sure,' the general added, 'with a few more battalions I should have got on even without that; but what are you to do if you have not got the battalions?' These words, I think, need no comment.

INCONVENIENCES OF TRAVELLING IN RUSSIA.

My countrymen often reproach me for living more abroad than in Russia. The reproach is just; but it has always happened that just as I was about to pitch my nomad tent on my native meadows by the Volga some trifling incident made me pause and delayed the execution of my intention.

I remember that I went to Turkestan unwillingly, because the only proper place for me seemed to be in Russia, where nature and man present so much that is interesting to the artist. My journey to the Asiatic frontier was chiefly occasioned by the extremely interesting war which was then going on. As soon as I had acquainted myself with everything there I decided to transfer my impressions to canvas and then to work at home. With this intention I started from Paris in 1869 for St. Petersburg, and just then one of these incidents happened which made me pause.

I had forgotten my passport somewhere or other, and when I got to the frontier and was

asked for it, I was obliged to answer, whether I liked it or not: 'I have none: I have lost it.'

'What! No passport!' The officer of gendarmes examined me at once. I was then little known as an artist, and so the officer probably thought it a serious matter, for I was told to take my things out from the baggage-van and to wait for what was to come. I waited. The first bell rang, then the second. I declared that I must go, as otherwise I should forfeit my ticket. 'You will not go.' 'What am I to do here? I cannot prove my identity here, whereas in St. Petersburg I can find any bail that may be required.' 'That is not to be thought of: you will stay here.' 'But, for Heaven's sake, I am not a criminal.' 'It is quite useless to make any objections: you will remain at the police-station until information has been received about you.'

After the train had gone, I was taken with an escort to the police-station and brought before the district inspector, who was in a dirty bad-smelling room. On the table at which he sat stood a tallow candle burnt nearly to the socket.

I must have looked very little like a criminal, for the official began to make apologies; he did not know at all how to accommodate me, the cells were so dirty. On my asking where the room intended

for me was, he opened the door of a dark bad-smelling hole where a few ragged individuals were visible. 'Who are these people?' 'Three are thieves, and the fourth is accused of street-robbery.' I refused to enter the place.

After some discussion I was allowed to hire a room at the inn, at my own expense, but I was to be guarded there. A fat dirty peasant in rags with a large knotty stick (I am not exaggerating) followed me. 'What does that man want?' 'He is your guard: he will spend the night with you.' 'On no account,' I declared. It was then decided to place this watchman behind a screen straight in front of my door. The police-officer shut the window, looked carefully all round, and, wishing me good-night, locked the door behind him.

Early the following day he reappeared to demand twenty kopecks for the peasant's services in guarding me (I give his very words). I paid them. Then a Jewish conveyance, hired at my expense, drove up to take me to the commandant of the district in the little neighbouring town of Vilkovishki. This man, a major, detained me a few hours, and then decided to transfer me to St. Petersburg.

Before my departure I was allowed not only to dine, but to walk about the dirty little town

—always accompanied, of course, by a policeman. Then I again hired a vehicle and drove with the policeman to the station, where I took a ticket for myself, and another for this archangel, and entered the train for St. Petersburg.

On arriving at the capital I was taken straight to the office of the secret police, where, in the absence of Superintendent Trepoff, my case was heard by his assistant, General Kosloff.

What most annoyed me in this stupid and ridiculous affair was that General Kosloff, although persuaded of my unblemished reputation, would not allow me to find surety at once and go my way in peace. 'You can do that to-morrow; for to-day betake yourself to the waiting-room at the police-station.' I was in utter despair. But an accident brought me help. As I was being led away the policeman demanded money for his return journey. I took out my purse and gave him some. 'What are you giving him?' the general asked. 'Money for his return journey,' I replied, and reported the unexpected expenses which had come upon me, not forgetting the watchman with his knotty stick. The general had compassion, but told the policeman to take the money. In return he allowed me to send at once to an acquaintance who lived near, who went bail for me. My friends,

to whom I told my adventure, only laughed; but it made a disagreeable impression on me.

'Is it possible that such a stupid affair can have had any effect upon you?' my countrymen will ask. I must answer in the affirmative. I put the question seriously to myself whether unshackled activity was possible in a country where the loss of a scrap of paper could entail such unpleasant consequences, and preferred another journey to Central Asia, where one certainly is exposed to danger, but yet can breathe and paint freely.

* * *

The second incident was still slighter, but called forth still uglier reflections. It was on a journey to my mother's estate. During the voyage on the Volga I was not a little astonished when our steamer stopped at some monastery, and monks came on board and held a service. Of course it did not occur to any one to complain of the stoppage; but, as we discovered afterwards, in consequence of it we arrived at Rybinsk half an hour too late, and thus missed the steamer which we intended to take at that place. We now had to reconcile ourselves to a sojourn of several days in this town, which generally wears a quiet, melancholy, and desolate aspect, as all Russian provincial towns do. But

shortly before May, when the vessels are being laden with corn there, Rybinsk is turned for two months into one huge drinking-shop. At this season, in all the inns, taverns, and dens of all kinds, noise, shrieking, and drunkenness prevail day and night. The streets are filled with people wandering about seeking all kinds of work, making engagements, abusing, cursing, &c. It was just at this season that we were obliged to make an involuntary stay at Rybinsk. I had my wife with me, and on her account was forced to be more particular in the matter of quarters. But our demands could not be satisfied, for all the inns were crowded. In one only did our request for a room receive the joyful answer 'Certainly.' We were then taken to the attics, where we were shown into a hole without any bed or the most necessary articles of furniture.

'Very well; but where are we to sleep?'

'Here,' answered the waiter complacently, pointing to an old leather sofa which was so torn that the stuffing was hanging out. 'I suppose you think we are dogs,' I retorted, and we started again on our search for a resting-place. We soon convinced ourselves that such a thing was really not to be found, and drove to the landing-stage, where I made the request that as we were placed in this unpleasant situation by the captain's fault we

should be given quarters on the steamer. 'How is it our fault?' asked the superintendent. 'In contradiction to the time-table, the steamer stopped at the monastery and a service was held: this stoppage was unjustifiable.' These words had scarcely passed my lips, when the official literally overwhelmed me with a torrent of reproaches and threats. 'What? What did you say? You do not believe in a God then? You insult our Orthodox Church.' The defender of the Orthodox Church was evidently drunk; but his rough behaviour, which attracted a number of people, was none the less intolerably insolent. 'Gendarmes, gendarmes, here!' he shouted. 'What a pity that there is no gendarme on the spot! otherwise you would learn that God is not to be insulted with impunity.'

'Give me the complaint-book.'

'We have none.' The officials brought, laughing, the first book they could find. 'Here is the complaint-book; write what you like—paper is patient.' When I went to the manager of the landing-stage with a remonstrance, he tried to appease me by saying, 'Do let the matter rest. He is drunk; what can you expect of him?' 'Very well; but if he is a drunkard why do you keep him in your service? He will insult others as

he has insulted me.' 'Well, do leave it alone; the matter is really not worth talking about.' And that is all I could get.

I already knew from the stories told by other members of my profession what disagreeable treatment artists are exposed to in some regions, especially on the part of the preservers of order, and how they are generally taken for revolutionists and agitators. This recurred to my mind after the incident just narrated, and I said to myself once more that it would be well to curtail my visits to my native plains, and to go to some country which, with fewer endearing associations, offered greater liberty of action.

THE END.

S.

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